

A Healthy Start to School



© 1998 Nova Scotia Department of Health
Revised 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010

The Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the school health teams, parents and teachers in the Western Health Region whose assistance has made this book possible.

We would also like to acknowledge:

Nobody's Perfect and Ready or Not!, for their inspiration and successful model for presenting information to parents.

The Feeling Good Inside & Out project at the IWK Health Centre for their information on healthy body image.

Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Children, Health Canada, 2002 ©
Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2003.

Writer: Jan Catano
Designer: Karen Brown


ISBN: 0-88871-365-7

Public Health Services


NOVA SCOTIA
Health Promotion
and Protection

www.gov.ns.ca/hpp

 PRINTED IN CANADA

 Printed on paper that
contains recycled fibre

Starting school is a big step in a child's life — and in a family's life too. New people, new places, new routines, new experiences... it can take a while to get used to it all.

It's good to know that you're not alone. Your child's education is a team effort for you, your child, your child's teacher and your school.

We want you to know that your child's health is a team effort too. Your Public Health Team is made up of a Public Health Nurse, licensed practical nurse, nutritionist, dental hygienist and health educator. The Public Health Team visits schools to offer advice, support and programs for students, parents and teachers.

Your Public Health Team can help you with issues like safety, disease prevention, parenting, active living and healthy eating. Any parent or community group can call the nearest local Public Health Services office and ask for someone from the Public Health Team to discuss a health issue that you'd like to learn more about. Phone numbers are listed in the last section of this book.

We hope this book will answer some of the health questions you may have now that your child is starting school. The book is divided into six sections:

- "Off to a Healthy Start" suggests things you can do to keep your child healthy at school
- "School Health and Safety" covers your child's health needs for school
- "Healthy Eating" contains information about the Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools as well as ideas for healthy breakfasts, lunches and snacks
- "Keeping Kids Healthy During the Elementary Years" offers information that you'll find helpful as your child moves through the school years
- "Preventing the Spread of Illness" tells you about diseases that you may hear more about now that your child will be spending more time with a larger group of kids
- "For More Information" offers a list of addresses, phone and fax numbers to contact for further information

Your child's school years are a time of growth, change and excitement. Enjoy them!

We hope the information in this book will help you and your child to have a healthy start in school.



Contents

Off to a Healthy Start

Parents Do Make a Difference	1
Get to Know Your Child's School	1
Learn About School Policies	1
Tell the School if Your Child Has Special Health Needs	1
Help Out at School if You Can	1
Help Your Child Get Used to School Rules	2
Support Your Child	2
Talk to the School About Your Concerns	2

School Health and Safety

Immunization	3
Walking to School Safely	5
Safety on the School Bus	5
Vision Screening	6
Hearing and Speech	6
Dental Health	6
Indoor Air Quality at School	7
Bullying	8
Violence and Abuse	9
Street Proofing and Personal Safety	10

Healthy Eating

Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools	12
School Policies on Food Allergies	12
Breakfast of Champions	13
Healthy Lunches	14
Snacks that Count	14
Keeping Foods Safe at School	16
Beverages	16
Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide	17

Keeping Kids Healthy During the Elementary Years

Ages and Stages	23
Self-Esteem	24
Body Image	25
Stress	26
Being Active	27
Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Children	28
Discipline	32
Talking to Your Kids About Sexuality	33

Safety	35
Booster Seats in Cars, Vans, Trucks and SUVs	35
Bike Safety	36
Playground Safety	37
Skateboards and Rollerblades	37
Poison Prevention	37
Protect Your Children From Second-Hand Smoke	38
Preventing Smoking	39
Sun Protection	39

Preventing the Spread of Illness

Hand Washing	41
Help Stop Illness From Spreading	41
Facts About Some Common Childhood Illnesses	43
Head Lice	46
Scabies or The Itch	47
Ringworm	48
Impetigo	49

For More Information

Public Health Services Offices	50
Mental Health Clinics	51
Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Clinics	52

Extra Information

How to Prevent, Find and Treat Head Lice	53
--	----

Off to a Healthy Start

Parents Do Make a Difference

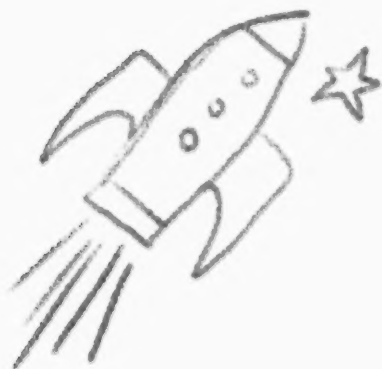
Starting school is an exciting time for parents and children. It can also be a scary time for small children and for parents thinking about their little one going off alone.

Parents have an important role to play in making their child's first experience with school happy and healthy. There's a lot you can do to help!

Get to Know Your Child's School

Your child will be healthier and happier in school if you show you care about what he or she is doing. Let your child know you care about school:

- Know the names of the teachers and the principal. Keep in touch with your child's teacher.
- Know who your child plays with at school. Know the names of his or her friends.
- Know what your child is learning and studying. Talk with your child about school. Listen when he or she talks to you about it.
- Go to parent-teacher meetings and support school activities.



Learn About School Policies

All schools have policies that guide how they handle issues like discipline, foods available at school, safety, poison prevention, taking medicine during school, and emergency care — like using epi-pens with children who have life threatening allergies. Find out what your school's policies are and help your child to learn and follow them.

Tell the School if Your Child Has Special Health Needs

Be sure to tell the school if your child has a health problem such as a severe allergy, diabetes or seizures. You will need to discuss your child's condition and any special needs with all school staff members. This includes teachers, bus drivers, food service staff and playground supervisors.

Help Out at School if You Can

Parents who have the time can work with other parents to make school safe and healthy. You can do this by joining the Home and School Association. If your school doesn't have a Home and School, you can work with other parents to start one. Parents can work together to look at things like playground safety, supervision for kids before and after school, the kinds of food that are available in the school, how fundraising is done and many other issues.

Help Your Child Get Used to School Rules

The kind of behaviour that is expected in school may be different from what your child has been used to at home or in preschool. Teachers have many children in the class and it is important for your child to understand that everyone needs to cooperate. Find out about your school's policy on discipline and talk with your child's teacher if you have any concerns.

Support Your Child

New experiences, even ones we're looking forward to, can be stressful. Help your child get used to the idea of going to school. Talk about what it will be like and listen when your child talks about what he or she expects or is worried about. Visit the school with your child and meet the teachers. You can also practice things like walking to the bus stop or to school and packing lunches and snacks.

Getting used to being part of a class, adjusting to new rules and learning how to get along with the teacher can be difficult for some children. Keep an eye on your child's behaviour and watch for changes that may show that your child's self esteem is suffering. These could be things like:

- not wanting to go to school
- not wanting to talk about school
- crying
- changes from the way your child normally eats, sleeps or acts

If you notice any of these changes talk with your child and your child's teacher. This is a time when your child will need extra love and support. See the section of this book called "Self-Esteem" for some ideas on how to help your child feel good about him or herself. If you are very worried, talk to your family doctor or Public Health Nurse.

Talk to the School About Your Concerns

If you have a concern about what your child is learning, how your child is adapting to school, how your child is getting along with the other kids, or any other issue, first call or meet with the teacher to talk about it. If you are still concerned after talking with the teacher, talk with the principal. If you are still not satisfied, go to the school board.

Don't be embarrassed to talk to the teacher about something that seems small. It is best for everyone if a small problem can be taken care of before it becomes a big problem.



School Health and Safety

Immunization

Starting school makes it more likely that your child could catch common childhood diseases. Immunization can protect your child from several of these. It's important that immunizations be kept up-to-date because illnesses can spread easily among children in a classroom.

Before school starts it is important to make sure that your child has the immunizations he or she needs. He or she should have a DaPTP (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio) and MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) booster. Your child should also have a Varicella vaccine if he or she has NOT had chickenpox (even a mild case) or has NOT had the vaccine already. The DaPTP and MMR boosters and the Varicella vaccine can be given during the same visit to the doctor or Public Health Nurse.

If your child suffers from a chronic illness — such as asthma or heart, lung or kidney disease — he or she should have an annual flu shot. This is especially important when your child starts school because flu can spread quickly in a classroom. As the parent of a child with a chronic illness, it is also recommended that you receive a flu shot. Getting a flu shot protects your own health as well as that of your child. Ask your doctor if your child also needs the Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine.

Check the schedule on the following page to see if your child's immunizations are up-to-date. If they're not, see your doctor or contact your local Public Health Services office. If your child has not had all the recommended shots by September, a Public Health Nurse may contact you.

Please see the Routine Immunization Schedule on page 4.

DID YOU KNOW: Adults need a Tetanus and Diphtheria booster every 10 years? Your health is important to your children!



Routine Immunization Schedule

Note: Childhood immunizations have changed in the past few years. This schedule may not reflect the vaccines that you or your children received. High risk children may be eligible for additional vaccines. For more information, talk to your family doctor or local Public Health Services office.

VACCINES		SCHEDULE					
		2 months	4 months	6 months	12 months	18 months	4-6 years
VACCINES	DaPTP+Hib <i>Diphtheria, acellular pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, polio, and Haemophilus influenzae type b vaccine</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	
	Pneumo Conj. <i>Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	
	Men C Conj. <i>Meningococcal group C conjugate vaccine</i>				✓		
	Varicella^{1,2} <i>Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine</i>				✓		
	MMR² <i>Measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine</i>				✓		✓
	DaPTP <i>Diphtheria, acellular pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, and polio vaccine</i>						✓

Seasonal Flu Shots

- Seasonal flu shots are free to all Nova Scotians. They are NOT recommended for babies under 6 months.
- Seasonal flu shots are strongly recommended for anyone who lives with or takes care of a child under 24 months, and for anyone living in a home where a newborn is expected during influenza season (October to April). This includes both adults and older children.
- Seasonal flu shots are also strongly recommended for children with a health condition that places them at high risk and for anyone who lives with or takes care of these children.
- Children under 9 years old getting their first flu shot need 2 doses.
- For more information about seasonal flu shots, see: www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/cdpc/influenza.asp

1 Children between 12 months and 12 years of age who have not had the vaccine or the disease (chickenpox) are eligible for the Varicella vaccine.

2 MMR and varicella vaccines must be given either on the same day or at least 4 weeks apart.

Walking to School Safely

Walking to school everyday is a great way to increase your child's physical activity. Although many parents walk with their children when they first start school, most children soon want to walk with their friends. When they walk to school without you, they need to know safety rules and understand why they must follow them.

To help keep your child safe:

- **Make up a schedule for walking to and from school.**
Your child should get used to leaving home on time and getting to school on time. Children also need to know when you expect them to arrive at home after school.
You should allow enough time so that your child doesn't have to rush, but not so much that he or she has time to fool around.
- **Pick the safest route to school.**
Pick the route to school that has the least traffic, the fewest intersections and the most sidewalks. Practice walking the route with your child. It is also a good idea to teach your child another safe route to school in case the regular route is cut off for some reason.
- **Encourage your children not to walk alone.**
Walking with a friend or in a group is safest. Parents can organize a "Walking School Bus" in their neighbourhood, where parents or other volunteers take turns walking all the children to school by "picking children up" along the way.
- **Teach your child some basic safety rules.**
Be sure your child understands that:
 - It is not safe to run out from between parked cars or to play in the street.
 - The only safe place to cross the street is at the corner. It is not safe to jay walk.

- When crossing the street, look in all directions to make sure no traffic is coming and it is safe to cross.
- When walking along a road, it is safest to walk along the left side, facing the traffic.
- Walk straight to school and straight home after school. It is not safe to talk to strangers or take rides with strangers.

It is a good idea to dress your child in bright colours so that he or she is easy to see, especially on rainy, cloudy or dark days.

It's also a good idea NOT to allow children to listen to music (for example, an MP3 player), or to use a cellphone or hand held video game) while walking to school. This is distracting and children may not be able to hear traffic warnings.

Safety on the School Bus

If your child travels on a school bus, make sure he or she understands and follows the school rules for how to behave on the bus. These rules are in place to help make the trip to and from school a safe one.

You should also show your child a safe place to stand while waiting for the bus. Be sure your child understands that it is dangerous to play near the road while waiting for the bus to arrive.

Most school bus injuries happen while children are getting on or off the bus. These injuries can happen when the bus driver can't see the child and hits him or her while pulling away, or when the child is hit by a car that doesn't stop for the flashing school bus lights.

The best way to protect your child is to take him or her to and from the bus stop and help him or her on and off the bus. If this isn't possible, talk to the bus driver about the safest way to get on and off the bus and then practice this with your child.

You'll find more information on safety in the section on "Keeping Kids Healthy During the Elementary Years."

Vision Screening

It is likely that the first Public Health Team member that your child will meet will be the nurse who tests his or her eyes during vision screening.

All children have their vision tested as part of the school health program when they are in grade primary or before they enter school.

The results of this test will be shared with you.

Vision screening is done when your child starts school because it is important to catch any problems right away. Catching vision problems early means that they can be corrected before they cause your child to fall behind in school.

It's a good idea to have your child's vision tested by an eye doctor (optometrist) before he or she starts school and on a regular basis throughout the school years. An eye examination every two years is covered by MSI until your child's 10th birthday.

Hearing and Speech

Your child's hearing is precious. A hearing loss that isn't noticed and treated will slow your child's speech and language development. This makes it more difficult for your child to connect with other people and can cause social, emotional and learning problems.

Parents are in the best position to notice hearing loss in their child.

Ask yourself:

- Does your child react to sounds and respond to voices the way other children do?
- Does your child seem to be speaking as well as other children who are the same age?
- Does your child often have ear infections that seem to linger?
- Has your child had any illnesses (like scarlet fever or mumps) or taken any medications that might cause hearing loss?
- Does your family have a history of hearing loss in childhood?

If you have questions or concerns about your child's speech or response to sound, contact the Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Clinic nearest you. Contact numbers are listed in the back of this book.

Dental Health

Helping your child learn good dental health habits is the start of a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums. Get each day off to a healthy start by making sure your child brushes well after breakfast.

Some good habits for healthy teeth:

- **Brush twice a day**, morning and evening, to remove plaque from teeth and gums. Plaque is a sticky layer of germs that forms on teeth and gums. It can cause cavities and gum disease if it isn't removed.
When brushing:
 - Use a soft bristled brush.
 - Use only a tiny pea-size amount of fluoride toothpaste and spit out the toothpaste after brushing.
 - Brush for the length of a song (about 2 or 3 minutes).
 - Children need help brushing their teeth every day until they are able to do a good job on their own (usually by age 8).

- **Floss between your child's teeth once a day.** This will remove plaque from between teeth and under the gums. Parents will need to help with their child's flossing until he/she is about 10 years old.
- **Check your child's teeth often.** If you notice any brown or white spots on your child's teeth, call a dentist. If they're not treated, these spots can lead to tooth decay.

Between the ages of 4 and 6, children begin to lose their primary teeth. Watch for your child's 6-year molars to come in behind the last primary teeth. Check with your dentist or dental hygienist to see if these molars need sealants. (A sealant is a thin plastic material that protects the teeth.)

- **Protect your child's teeth.** Teach your child not to chew on things like pencils and to be careful when playing on swings, slides and other playground equipment. When your child starts to play sports — neighbourhood games like street hockey as well as organized sports — encourage him or her to use a mouthguard. If your child injures a tooth, call your dentist right away.
- **Pack healthy, tooth-friendly, snacks for your child to eat at school.** Sticky, sugary snacks cling to the teeth and cause tooth decay. Fresh fruit and vegetables; cheddar cheese; cooked eggs; whole grain (for example, oat, corn, rye, or rice) or whole wheat crackers and breads sticks are snacks that are both nutritious and friendly to teeth.
- **Take your child to the dentist regularly.** From their first birthday on, children should have regular visits to the dentist. With regular visits, the dentist can catch problems before they become serious. Your dentist can also give you advice on

preventing tooth decay and explain which services are covered by the MSI Children's Oral Health Program. You can also call QuickCard Solutions toll-free number: 1-888-846-9199. In the Halifax Regional Municipality, call: 832-3253.

School-based Fluoride Mouthrinse Program

Fluoride mouthrinse also helps to build healthy teeth by allowing fluoride to coat the outer surface of teeth. This makes the tooth enamel stronger and more able to resist cavities. Public Health Services offers a weekly Fluoride Mouthrinse Program to children in grades primary through six in selected elementary schools across Nova Scotia. The program is coordinated and supported by Public Health Dental Hygienists and delivered by trained volunteers. If your child attends a school where the program is offered, a consent form and fact sheet on the program will be sent home early in the school year.

Indoor Air Quality at School

Children spend a large part of the day in school. This means that a comfortable and healthy school environment is important to their health, well-being and ability to learn.

Some parents, especially those whose children suffer from asthma and allergies, may be concerned about the quality of the air in their child's school. Comfort and the quality of the air can be affected by temperature, humidity, the amount of fresh air and the operation and maintenance of the air handling system (if your child's school has one). Dust, certain kinds of mould, school renovations and the vapours some products release into the air can also affect the health and comfort of students and teachers.

If you are worried about air quality or health problems that may be affected by the physical environment at your child's school, talk with your child's teacher and principal

to try to find out what exactly is causing the problem. Changes in the kinds of products used in the school or improvements in the way the school is cleaned may solve the problem. Changes in the operation of the air handling units may also help.

If you are still concerned, you can contact the school board, your local office of the Department of Environment or your local Public Health Services office.

Bullying

Bullying is repeated, harmful acts or cruel behaviour against another person. It can include:

- Rejecting or excluding a child from a group
- Name-calling, put-downs, teasing, humiliation
- Saying mean or cruel things about a child
- Hitting, kicking or hurting physically
- Frightening or threatening
- Damaging belongings

Bullying is a serious issue and school is a place where bullying can happen. Bullying affects all children, whether they are bullies, victims of a bully, or see others being bullied. The effects of bullying can last a lifetime.

Unfortunately, most bullying goes unnoticed and unreported. Teachers, students, support staff, parents and administrators need to work as a team to take action against bullying.

How should my child react to bullying?

If your child sees someone being bullied, tell him or her to:

- Be a friend for the victim.
- Never join in with the bullying. Never encourage a bully.
- Ask a teacher or other adult to stop the bullying. Sometimes it might feel safer if a group of children tell their teacher about the bullying together.

If your child is being bullied, tell him or her to:

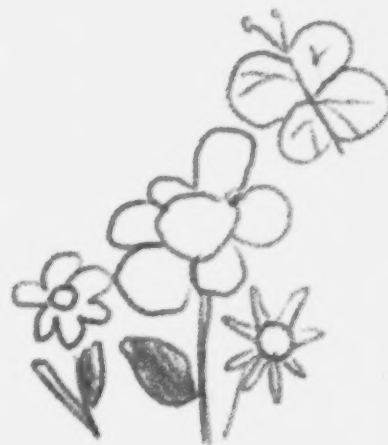
- Avoid being alone with a bully.
- Call for help. Ask an adult to help out.
- Take a stand. Try not to get angry or act afraid. Try using humor or being assertive when dealing with bullies.

Children are sometimes bullied because they are different in some way. They can be targets of a bully because of the colour of their skin, their name, their size, their intelligence, the way they walk — anything that makes them stand out. Help your children to understand that they are not the problem. The bully is the problem. No one should have to put up with being bullied.

If your child is a bully, he or she needs to change. Help your child to:

- Stop the behavior immediately.
- Take responsibility for his or her actions.
- Find new ways to act that don't hurt people.
- Find friends who do not bully or hurt others.

Children who bully others often have low self-esteem. Sometimes they have been bullied themselves. They need your help to deal with these problems.



Violence and Abuse

As your child moves out into the bigger world of school, he or she will be meeting new people and dealing with new situations. At some point, you or your child may have to deal — directly or indirectly — with violence or abuse.

Child abuse is not limited to any one group of people. It can happen to any family — rich or poor, city or country, one parent or two.

Violence and abuse can take several forms.

- **Physical Abuse** is any act that physically hurts or injures a child. This includes hitting, cutting, burning, kicking and pushing. Anything that hurts is physical abuse.
- **Neglect** is what happens when a child is not given the care needed for healthy physical, mental or social growth. It is neglect when a family doesn't give a child good food and clothing; a clean, safe place to live; good medical and health care; and good general care. It is also neglect when a family doesn't watch over a child and keep him or her safe.
- **Emotional Abuse** can take many different forms. Not showing love for a child; rejecting, criticizing, ignoring or frightening a child; and often speaking cruelly or angrily to a child are all forms of emotional abuse.
- **Sexual Abuse** happens when an adult or teenager uses a child for sexual purposes. It can include rape, incest, touching or playing with a child's private parts, having a child touch another person's private parts or using a child for pornographic materials or for prostitution.

Children are also considered to be abused and in need of protection if they are in a home where they witness violence between others, for example their father abusing their mother.

Parents should be aware of:

- **Shared responsibility.**

Parents should realize that when a child starts school, the welfare of the child becomes a concern of the school as well as of the family. If the professionals who work with a child — teachers, counselors, principals, Public Health staff — have any reason to suspect that the child is being neglected or physically, emotionally, or sexually abused, they have a legal and moral obligation to report it to an agency.

- **Personal responsibility.**

When they start school, children begin to bring new friends home to play. Parents who have reason to believe that one of their child's friends is being abused or neglected, have a legal obligation to report their concerns to the Department of Community Services or the Children's Aid Society.

- **Schoolyard violence.**

Children may see violence in movies, on TV or at home and some of them act it out on the playground. Every child deserves a safe school environment and it's hard for anyone to feel safe if he or she is being bullied.



If you are concerned about violence in your child's school, or if you think your child is being bullied, talk to your child's teacher. Schools have policies to deal with violence. Some schools have a "zero tolerance" policy that specifies certain kinds of discipline for any form of violence or hitting. Many schools are introducing "violence-free school" programs or conflict resolution programs to teach kids skills for dealing with disputes without violence. Your child needs to understand what is considered to be "violent" at his or her school.

Street Proofing and Personal Safety

Most parents tell their children "be careful of strangers" and "don't go anywhere with someone you don't know." But did you know that more than 8 out of 10 abusers are people the child knows?

To help keep your children safe, you need some rules that apply to everyone, even people your children know. You need to help your children practice using these rules and to be sure they understand why they are important.

As a parent:

- **Check your babysitter's references.** If your children go to the sitter's home, be sure you check out any other teens or adults who will be there when children are present.
- **Get to know the adults and teens who work with your children.** This includes adults and teens your children know at school, church, sports and clubs.
- **Use the proper names of body parts (for example, penis, vagina, breasts).** Your children need to hear these words used and be comfortable using them.

- **Teach your children the difference between "good touches" and "bad touches."** Most touching is positive and healthy. The cuddles, hugs and kisses you share with your children are "good touches" — you and your children feel loved, comforted, close and safe. Sharing lots of good touches will help your children recognize bad touches if they ever encounter them.

Give examples of bad touches, like:

- "No one should touch your private parts."
- "It's wrong for someone to ask you to touch his penis."
- "Asking you to take your clothes off counts as a bad touch."
- "Anytime hugging, kissing or tickling makes you feel funny, it's a bad touch."

Bad touching does not feel good or safe. Tell your children to listen to their feelings. No child has to put up with anything that feels wrong or uncomfortable.

- **Be sure your children know it's OK to say "No, don't touch me!" or "Stop that!"** It takes a lot of self-confidence for children to be able to say this to an adult or a teenager. All children need to know that they have the right to say "NO" if someone touches them or asks them to do something that makes them uncomfortable. They need to know that this is not rude.

You need to respect your children's right to say "No", too. Children should not be forced into any activity they are not comfortable with. This includes, kissing, tickling, squeezing or spending private time with anyone they don't want to be with.

- **Let your children know that they can trust you and talk to you.** Children need to know that they must tell a parent if anyone — even someone they love — threatens them or touches them in a way that doesn't feel right. Tell your child that it is wrong for an adult or a teenager to ask them to keep things they do together secret.

When your children talk to you, listen to and respect what they say. For example, if a child says, "I don't like my music teacher any more," ask "Why not?"

As a family:

- **Use a secret family code.** This is a special word or phrase that will tell your child it's safe to go with an adult or teenager. Your child should NEVER go with anyone, even close family friends, unless the friend can give the child the secret code. Once the code has been used, it should be changed.
- **Make some family rules.**
 - Walk in pairs or a group, not alone.
 - Walk home from school the same way every day, unless their regular route is blocked (by construction, for example). Your child must tell you if he or she is coming home a different way.
 - Do not go into public washrooms alone.
 - You will be on time to pick up your child. If you are going to be late for a pick-up, you and your child should agree in advance on a safe place for the child to wait. For example, a well-lit store, inside the arena or inside the school are safe places.
- **Learn about sexual abuse prevention as a family.** Read a book or watch a video together. Talk about it with your child. A good video is "Feeling Yes, Feeling No," which may be available from your local library.

What should you do if your child tells you he or she has been approached or assaulted?

Try not to panic. Don't let your anger show — your child could easily think that you are angry at him or her. Tell your child, "I'm so glad you told me about this."

- **Listen to your child.** Take it slowly. Ask for details but let him or her tell you what happened in his or her own words. Use drawings or dolls if this is easier for your child, but don't suggest other words or change what's being said. Your ideas might confuse the child and blur the truth.
- **Believe your child.** Children seldom lie about sexual abuse. Tell your child that you believe him or her. Tell your child that you are glad he or she told you what happened.
- **Do not blame your child.** Say, "This is not your fault." Do not let your child think for one minute that he or she is to blame for what happened or is in any way at fault.
- **Support your child.** Recognize and accept your child's feelings, whether they are anger, fear, sadness or anxiety. Let your child know that you will protect him or her from further abuse.
- **Get help.** The law says that you must call the police or child protection officials at once if you have reason to believe that your child, or any child, has been abused. You may also want to think about getting counselling to help your child through the healing process.

Healthy Eating

Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools

All students need healthy food and beverages to grow, learn, play, and develop into healthy adults.

Children learn about healthy eating in the classroom and at home. Having healthy food and beverages available in school helps support healthy eating messages learned in the classroom, at home, and in other settings.

Eating well and making healthy food choices takes more than will power. The *Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools* makes it easier for students to make wise food and beverage choices while in school.

Principals, teachers, parents, students, government and Public Health staff, and nutrition professionals created the *Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools*.

The policy helps ensure that the food and beverages served and sold in school canteens, cafeterias, vending machines, meal programs, and for special functions and fundraising:

- are healthy, safe, and affordable
- support student health and learning
- support the health messages learned in the classroom and at home
- make healthy food and beverage choices easy

The policy is based on *Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide* (see page 17 to 22) and describes the kinds of food and beverages schools can serve and sell during the school day. The foods and beverages served and sold in your child's school should include a wide selection of vegetables and fruit, whole grains, and lower fat choices.

The policy does not apply to food or beverages that you send to school for your child's lunch and recess snacks. However, we encourage you to support your school's efforts to give children healthy food choices.

Schools have gradually changed the kinds of food and beverages served and sold to students since September 2006. Full implementation of this policy is now in effect (as of June 2009). Schools will be provided with ongoing local and provincial support to maintain the policy and parents are encouraged to provide support as well. Many schools have 'healthy food' committees that make decisions about the food and beverages served and sold in school. Ask if your child's school has a 'healthy food' committee and think about becoming involved.

To find out more about the *Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools* ask to see a copy at your child's school or visit www.ednet.ns.ca.

School Policies on Food Allergies

Some children have life-threatening allergies to peanuts or other foods.

Find out if your child's school has a policy to protect children with allergies. For example, some policies state that children cannot bring certain foods — like peanut butter — to school or carry them on the bus.

If your school has a policy like this, your child can continue to enjoy peanuts, peanut butter and other foods that contain nuts, at home.

You can get ideas for healthy lunches and snacks from your local Public Health Services office.

Breakfast of Champions

Breakfast is important for everyone but it is critical for growing children. Without a good breakfast, children may be tired, cranky, and have trouble concentrating. This makes it difficult for them to learn. Children who eat breakfast feel better and do better in school.

Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide has four food groups:

- Vegetables and Fruit
- Grain Products
- Milk and Alternatives
- Meat and Alternatives

You'll find a copy of the *Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide* on page 17 to 22. A healthy breakfast has foods from three of these four food groups. For example, a bagel (Grain Products), an orange (Vegetables and Fruit), and a glass of milk (Milk and Alternatives) make a healthy breakfast and will get kids off to a good start. See *Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide* for the amount and type of foods and beverages that are recommended for your child.

Foods like cake, donuts, toaster pastries and sugary fruit beverages don't give kids the nourishment they need to start their day. These foods and beverages are high in calories, fats, sugar, and/or salt (sodium) and they shouldn't replace the recommended healthy foods from the four food groups.

Breakfast doesn't have to be fancy or traditional. Try leftovers, cheese and crackers, or a sandwich. If you're short of time in the morning, get breakfast ready the night before. You can also pack extra food with their lunch so your children can eat breakfast on the way to school or after they get there.

**Some children have life-threatening allergies to peanuts or other foods. Find out if your child's school has a policy to protect children with allergies.*

Breakfast Ideas

Yogurt Shake

In a blender mix fruit, yogurt, milk, and all-bran cereal.

Cheese Boats

Tuck slices of cheese into celery sticks. Serve with whole grain toast, crackers, or a muffin.

Jiffy Pizza

Top half a whole-wheat bun or English muffin with tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese. Bake.

Happy Face Cereal

Top hot, whole grain cereal (e.g. oatmeal) with slices of bananas, apples, or other fruit to make a happy face. Serve with lower fat (e.g. 2%, 1%, or skim) milk or yogurt.

Apple Treasures

Core an apple, stuff with peanut or nut butter,* and top with raisins.

Nutty Bananas

Dip a banana in lower fat yogurt and roll in wheat germ, crushed nuts,* or dry whole grain cereal. Enjoy with a glass of lower fat milk.

Breakfast Trail Mix

Mix together different dry whole grain cereals, (e.g. cheerios, shreddies, bite-size shredded wheat) pretzels, and nuts,* in a plastic bag. A juice box makes it a complete breakfast to go.

Toasted Cheese Treat

A toasted whole grain sandwich with cheddar cheese and tomato can provide a tasty morning alternative.

Sandwiches

Try egg salad, cheese, peanut or nut butter, tuna, or salmon. Use different kinds of whole grain breads, rolls, or wraps.

Healthy Lunches

Lunches for school can taste good, be easy to pack and eat and still be healthy.

For healthy lunches:

- Choose Grain Products lower in fat, sugar, and/or salt (sodium)
- Choose Vegetables and Fruit more often than juices
- Choose lower fat Milks and Alternatives (i.e. skim, 1%, or 2% milk fat)
- Choose lean Meats and Alternatives with little or no added fat or salt.

Variety and imagination are the key:

- Enjoy a variety of foods from the four food groups. See *Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide* for the recommended amount and type of foods and beverages for your child.
- Make sandwiches with different kinds of grain products, like bagels, pitas, flour tortillas, and rolls. Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day.
- Make sandwiches more interesting by adding some vegetables or fruit like grated carrot, red or green pepper, apple slices, lettuce, cucumber, tomato, or onion.

TIP: To get at least one dark green (e.g. broccoli, romaine lettuce) and one orange vegetable (e.g. carrot, sweet potato) each day, pack one in a lunch or add it to a sandwich.

Healthy Lunch Ideas

Pizza Lunch

Left-over cheese or vegetable pizza
Pear
Lower fat milk

"Enviro" Cracker Pack Lunch

Skip the pre-packed and make your own:
Variety of whole grain crackers
Hard cheese, slices of lean meats, boiled egg
Sliced cucumber and peppers
Lower fat yogurt and fruit

Munch on the Move

Peanut or other nut butter*
Cheese chunk or lower fat yogurt
Fruit cup
Lower fat milk

Wrap 'n Roll

Tortilla wrap with slices of lean chicken, beef or ham, cheddar cheese, and lettuce
Banana
Orange juice

Bagel Sandwich Lunch

Whole grain bagel sandwich with tuna salad
Carrot and celery sticks
Lower fat chocolate milk

Mexican Fiesta

Bean and vegetable burrito
Lower fat milk
Orange

Snacks That Count

Pack a snack for recess! Active, growing children need small, nutritious snacks to keep them going throughout the day.

**Some children have life-threatening allergies to peanuts or other foods. Find out if your child's school has a policy to protect children with allergies.*

See *Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide* for recommended amounts and types of foods and beverages for your child

Healthy snacks have foods from at least two of the four food groups and are "tooth-friendly" — that is, they don't leave sticky sugar on children's teeth. Sweet, sticky foods increase the risk of cavities and shouldn't be eaten as snacks at school. Save them for

special occasions at home where children can brush their teeth after eating them.

Snacks can be good for the environment as well as good for children. You can pack snacks in reusable plastic containers, wrap them in waxed paper that can go in the compost bin, or send snacks that don't need to be wrapped at all, like fresh fruit.

Foods for Healthy Snacking at School

Choose Vegetables & Fruit More Often than Juices

- Raw fruit (e.g. apples, pears, bananas)
- Canned fruit
- Raw vegetables (e.g. carrot, celery, broccoli, turnip)
- Fruit juice
- Vegetable juice

Choose Whole Grain Products (low in fat, sugar, and salt). Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day.

- Whole grain bread or crackers
- Unsweetened, whole grain cereal
- Lower fat whole grain muffin
- Pita bread
- Bagel

Choose Lower Fat Milk and Alternatives

- Milk, white or flavoured (2% MF or less)
- Fortified soy beverages
- Yogurt or yogurt dip (2% MF or less)
- Hard cheese (less than 20% MF)

Choose Lean Meat & Alternatives (with little or no added fat or salt)

- Lean meat slices
- Dry roasted nuts and seeds (no added salt or oil)*
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Peanut or nut butters*
- Hummus
- Baked beans

Try a Great Snack Combination

- Whole grain crackers and lower fat cheese
- Peanut or nut butter* on a whole grain bagel
- Half of a sandwich
- Lower fat yogurt parfait with lower fat granola
- Fruit and plain yogurt
- Whole grain crackers, vegetables, and bean based dip
- Trail mix (mix of whole grain cereals) and lower fat milk

Snacks to Limit

Another important step towards better health and healthy body weight is to limit foods and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar and/or salt (sodium) such as: chocolate and candies; cookies and donuts; ice cream and frozen desserts; French fries and potato chips; fruit-flavoured drinks, soft drinks, sports energy drinks.

**Some children have life-threatening allergies to peanuts or other foods. Find out if your child's school has a policy to protect children with allergies.*

Keeping Foods Safe at School

To keep lunches and snacks fresh and healthy:

- Store lunches and snacks in the fridge until the kids are ready to leave for the day.
- Pack foods that need to be kept cold in an insulated lunch bag. Include an ice pack or frozen juice box.
- Don't depend on a thermos to keep hot foods hot. A thermos may not be able to keep the food hot enough to prevent food poisoning. If you send foods like soup, spaghetti, or casserole to school, keep them cold. In some schools children can reheat these kinds of foods.
- Wash lunch bags and boxes, plastic containers, and all utensils every day. Used plastic, waxed paper, or foil wrappings may carry bacteria and shouldn't be reused.

Beverages

Healthy, active children often get thirsty and need to drink throughout the day.

See *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* (pages 17 to 22) for the recommended amounts and types of beverages for your child.

Water: Remember to encourage children to satisfy their thirst with water between meals! Water is a calorie-free way to quench thirst. It is the least expensive and most convenient drink of all. Children need to drink more water in hot weather or when they are very active. Plain unsweetened, unflavoured water with no additives (for example, caffeine, herbals) and no artificial sweeteners is recommended. Water can be frozen in a plastic bottle and used to keep lunches cold. Be sure to wash the water bottle every day.

Milk: Milk is a very important source of vitamin D and calcium, vitamins and minerals children need to grow strong bones and teeth. Participating in a School Milk Program is a good way to be sure your child gets milk during the school day.

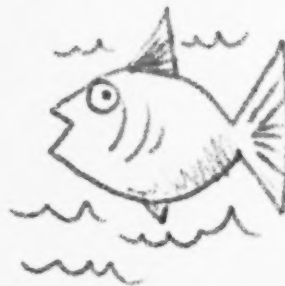
Unsweetened fruit or vegetable juices: Check the package label to be sure you are getting 100% fruit or vegetable juice. Even if fruit beverages have added nutrients, they are not as nourishing as 100% fruit juice.

There are many different kinds of 100% juices:

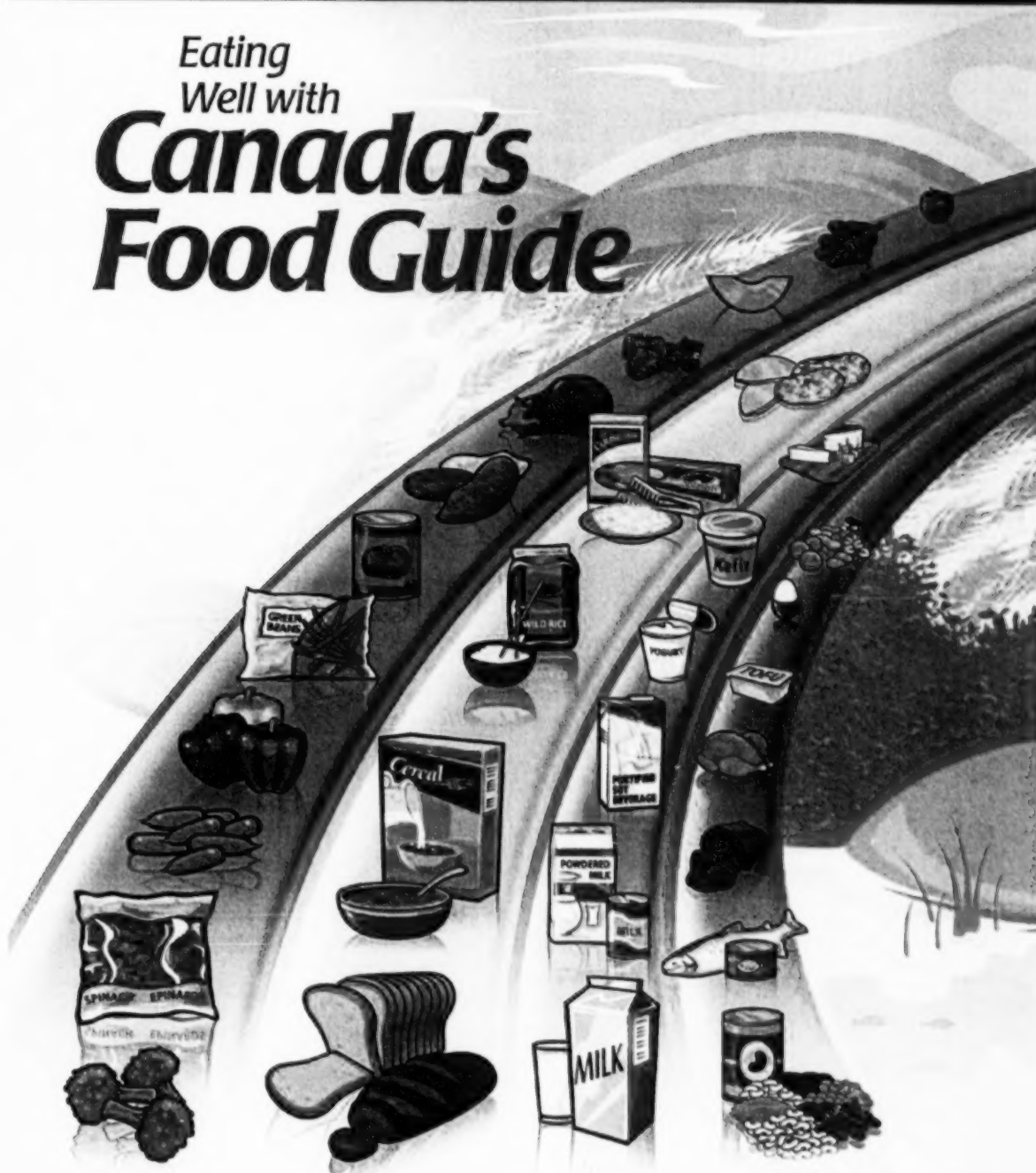
- orange
- apple
- tomato
- pineapple
- vegetable blends
- grapefruit
- cranberry juice
- grape (either white or purple)

Don't let juice replace other nourishing foods. One serving of juice is small—just 125 mL or 1/2 cup. Many juice packs contain more than 500 mL, which counts as four servings of fruits or vegetables. Think about giving your child smaller, 250 mL juice packs to be sure that juice doesn't replace other nourishing foods and beverages.

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide recommends choosing vegetables and fruits more often than juices.



Eating Well with **Canada's Food Guide**



Canadă

Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings per Day

Age in Years Sex	Children			Teens		Adults			
	2-3	4-8	9-13	14-18		19-50		51+	
	Girls and Boys			Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
Vegetables and Fruit	4	5	6	7	8	7-8	8-10	7	7
Grain Products	3	4	6	6	7	6-7	8	6	7
Milk and Alternatives	2	2	3-4	3-4	3-4	2	2	3	3
Meat and Alternatives	1	1	1-2	2	3	2	3	2	3

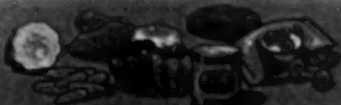




















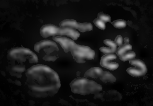
The chart above shows how many Food Guide Servings you need from each of the four food groups every day.

Having the amount and type of food recommended and following the tips in *Canada's Food Guide* will help:

- Meet your needs for vitamins, minerals and other nutrients.
- Reduce your risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer and osteoporosis.
- Contribute to your overall health and vitality.

What is One Food Guide Serving?

Look at the examples below.

					
Fresh, frozen or canned vegetables 125 mL (½ cup)	Leafy vegetables Cooked: 125 mL (½ cup) Raw: 250 mL (1 cup)	Fresh, frozen or canned fruits 1 fruit or 125 mL (½ cup)	100% Juice 125 mL (½ cup)		
					
Bread 1 slice (35 g)	Bagel ½ bagel (45 g)	Flat breads ½ pita or ½ tortilla (35 g)	Cooked rice, bulgur or quinoa 125 mL (½ cup)	Cereal Cold: 30 g Hot: 175 mL (¾ cup)	Cooked pasta or couscous 125 mL (½ cup)
					
Milk or powdered milk (reconstituted) 250 mL (1 cup)	Canned milk (evaporated) 125 mL (½ cup)	Fortified soy beverage 250 mL (1 cup)	Yogurt 175 g (¾ cup)	Kefir 175 g (¾ cup)	Cheese 50 g (1 ½ oz.)
					
Cooked fish, shellfish, poultry, lean meat 75 g (2 ½ oz.) 125 mL (½ cup)	Cooked legumes 175 mL (¾ cup)	Tofu 150 g or 125 mL (½ cup)	Eggs 1 egg	Peanut or seed butter 30 mL (2 Tbsp)	Nuts and seeds 30 mL (2 Tbsp)

Oils and Fats

- Include a small amount – 30 to 45 mL (2 to 3 Tbsp) – of unsaturated fat each day. This includes oil used for cooking, salad dressings, margarine and mayonnaise.
- Use vegetable oils such as canola, olive and soybean.
- Choose soft margarines that are low in saturated and trans fats.
- Limit butter, hard margarine, lard and shortening.



Make each Food Guide Serving count...

wherever you are - at home, at school, at work or when eating out!

- Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.

- **Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day.**

Eat a variety of whole grains such as barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa and wild rice.

Enjoy whole grain breads, oatmeal or whole wheat pasta.

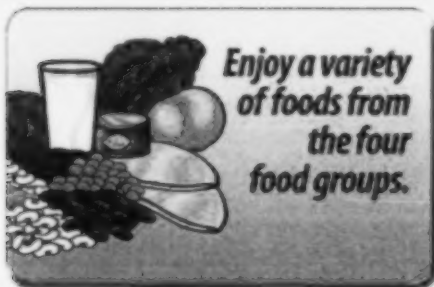
► Choose grain products that are lower in fat, sugar or salt.

Compare the Nutrition Facts table on labels to make wise choices.

Enjoy the true taste of grain products. When adding sauces or spreads, use small amounts.

- Drink skim, 1%, or 2% milk each day.

► **Select lower fat milk alternatives.**



* Health Canada provides advice for limiting exposure to mercury from certain types of fish. Refer to www.healthcanada.gc.ca for the latest information.

Advice for different ages and stages...

Children

Following *Canada's Food Guide* helps children grow and thrive.

Young children have small appetites and need calories for growth and development.

- Serve small nutritious meals and snacks each day.
- Do not restrict nutritious foods because of their fat content. Offer a variety of foods from the four food groups.
- Most of all... be a good role model.



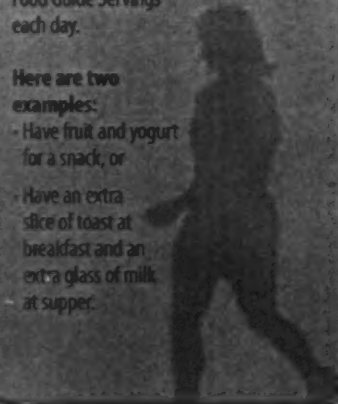
Women of childbearing age

All women who could become pregnant and those who are pregnant or breastfeeding need a multivitamin containing **folic acid** every day. Pregnant women need to ensure that their multivitamin also contains **iron**. A health care professional can help you find the multivitamin that's right for you.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women need more calories. Include an extra 2 to 3 Food Guide Servings each day.

Here are two examples:

- Have fruit and yogurt for a snack, or
- Have an extra slice of toast at breakfast and an extra glass of milk at supper.



Men and women over 50

The need for **vitamin D** increases after the age of 50.

In addition to following *Canada's Food Guide*, everyone over the age of 50 should take a daily vitamin D supplement of 10 µg (400 IU).



How do I count Food Guide Servings in a meal?

Here is an example:

Vegetable and beef stir-fry with rice, a glass of milk and an apple for dessert

250 mL (1 cup) mixed broccoli, carrot and sweet red pepper	=	2 Vegetables and Fruit Food Guide Servings
75 g (2 1/4 oz.) lean beef	=	1 Meat and Alternatives Food Guide Serving
250 mL (1 cup) brown rice	=	2 Grain Products Food Guide Servings
5 mL (1 tsp) canola oil	=	part of your Oils and Fats intake for the day
250 mL (1 cup) 1% milk	=	1 Milk and Alternatives Food Guide Serving
1 apple	=	1 Vegetables and Fruit Food Guide Serving



Eat well and be active today and every day!

The benefits of eating well and being active include:

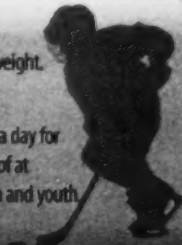
- Better overall health.
- Lower risk of disease.
- A healthy body weight.
- Feeling and looking better.
- More energy.
- Stronger muscles and bones.

Be active

To be active every day is a step towards better health and a healthy body weight.

Canada's Physical Activity Guide recommends building 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity into daily life for adults and at least 90 minutes a day for children and youth. You don't have to do it all at once. Add it up in periods of at least 10 minutes at a time for adults and five minutes at a time for children and youth.

Start slowly and build up.



Eat well

Another important step towards better health and a healthy body weight is to follow Canada's Food Guide by:

- Eating the recommended amount and type of food each day.
- Limiting foods and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar or salt (sodium) such as cakes and pastries, chocolate and candies, cookies and granola bars, doughnuts and muffins, ice cream and frozen desserts, french fries, potato chips, nachos and other salty snacks, alcohol, fruit flavoured drinks, soft drinks, sports and energy drinks, and sweetened hot or cold drinks.

Read the label

- Compare the Nutrition Facts table on food labels to choose products that contain less fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and sodium.
- Keep in mind that the calories and nutrients listed are for the amount of food found at the top of the Nutrition Facts table.

Nutrition Facts

Per 0 mL (0 g)

Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 0	
Fat 0 g	0 %
Saturates 0 g	0 %
+ Trans 0 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 0 mg	0 %
Carbohydrate 0 g	0 %
Fibre 0 g	0 %
Sugars 0 g	
Protein 0 g	
Vitamin A 0 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 0 %	Iron 0 %

Limit trans fat

When a Nutrition Facts table is not available, ask for nutrition information to choose foods lower in trans and saturated fats.

Take a step today...

- ✓ Have breakfast every day. It may help control your hunger later in the day.
- ✓ Walk whenever you can – get off the bus early, use the stairs.
- ✓ Benefit from eating vegetables and fruit at all meals and as snacks.
- ✓ Spend less time being inactive such as watching TV or playing computer games.
- ✓ Request nutrition information about menu items when eating out to help you make healthier choices.
- ✓ Enjoy eating with family and friends!
- ✓ Take time to eat and savour every bite!



For more information, interactive tools, or additional copies visit Canada's Food Guide on-line at: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

or contact:

Publications
Health Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9
E-Mail: publications@hc-sc.gc.ca
Tel.: 1-866-225-0709
Fax: (613) 941-5366
TTY: 1-800-267-1245

Également disponible en français sous le titre :
Bien manger avec le Guide alimentaire canadien

This publication can be made available on request on diskette, large print, audio-cassette and braille.

Keeping Kids Healthy During the Elementary Years

Ages and Stages

The years when children are starting school are a time of growth and change. Before your eyes, children get bigger and stronger. They're able to do new things and begin to find new ways to get along with others. Going to school will help your child develop, but your role is still important.

Between the ages of 4 and 7, your child is developing physically, mentally and socially:

Physical Development Skills

- Bouncing a ball, walking backwards, skipping, hopping, marching and learning to ride a bike
- Using a knife and fork and learning to eat neatly and politely
- Learning to tie shoes, to print and write and develop more skill at drawing

Mental Development Processes

- Asking a lot of questions — how? what? why? Be patient and try to answer them.
- Talking and learning lots of new words to express ideas
- Acting and telling stories. Beginning to be much clearer about what's real and what's make-believe.
- Learning to count, to read, and to try to solve problems

Social Development Milestones

- Understanding and following rules
- Wanting to please, to help you and to take on responsibility. Wanting to be treated like big kids. Taking pride in what they are able to do.
- Needing attention and support. Some kids this age would rather talk than eat. They need to know someone cares enough to listen.
- Playing more complicated games and playing more and more with other kids. Keep an eye on the amount of time your children spend watching TV or videos. Make sure they have the chance to do many different things and to play with other kids.

These are interesting and exciting years for children and for parents! You and your school can do a lot to help your child develop physically, mentally and socially.



Self-Esteem

"Self-esteem" is the term that describes how people feel about themselves.

When children feel good about themselves, they have the confidence to try new things, to make new friends, and to respect others. Feeling good about themselves helps children to do well and to make good choices in their lives.

Every child is one of a kind. Every child has strengths and weaknesses, things they're good at and things they don't like to do. In order to grow up to be strong and healthy adults, children need to like themselves and to see themselves as worthwhile people. In other words, they need to have good self-esteem.

Parents have a big part to play in helping their children build self-esteem. You are the most important people in your children's lives. Your opinion matters more than anyone else's. All children need to know that their parents love and accept them as they are.

To help your kids feel good about themselves:

- **Let them know you love them.**
 - Say "I love you."
 - Hug them, kiss them, pat them on the shoulder.
 - Smile when you see them coming.

- **Praise them.**
 - When they do something right, tell them. Don't wait until they do something wrong and then criticize.
 - Praise them for trying, even if they don't succeed. Effort counts, too.
 - Focus on the things your child does well, not on the things he or she isn't as good at. Don't compare your children. Each is special in their own way.
- **Give them jobs to do.**
 - Children feel good when they know you depend on them.
 - Praise them when they do their job well. If they don't do their job, tell them you are disappointed. Give them a chance to do it right.
- **Respect them**
 - Listen when they talk to you. Let them know you think their ideas matter.
 - Ask them what they think.
 - Respect their feelings. Don't make fun of them, pick on them, or belittle them.

Children who are loved and respected learn to love and respect themselves. They grow up to be people who love and respect others.

Body Image

How children feel about their body has a big effect on how they feel about themselves.

Children first see themselves through the eyes of the people they care about — their parents, caregivers, family members and friends. They develop good or bad feelings about their body based on the way others react to the way they look.

Parents play an important part in helping children develop a healthy body image.

- **Accept your children's appearance and teach them that we all come in different shapes and sizes.** Focus and comment on your children's many good qualities rather than on how they look. For example, praise qualities like their sense of humour, their kindness, how well they share with others and how much you enjoy their company.
- **Help your children to discover what their body can do and what they enjoy doing.** Explore a variety of activities like running, jumping, throwing, dancing, singing, playing music, drawing, and doing crafts. Try not to limit your children's activities based on gender. It's okay for girls to be interested in things like karate or for boys to be interested in dance.

Encourage an active family lifestyle by limiting the amount of time kids spend watching TV and playing video games. Give children the opportunity to swim, play, ride bikes and walk. Be active along with them.

Post photos of your children being active and having fun on the fridge or in another visible spot. This will let your kids know that you're proud of them and remind them of activities they enjoy.

- **Do not accept unkind remarks about your child's — or anyone else's — appearance.** Being teased can make anyone feel bad about their body. If you find out that someone is making unkind comments about your child's appearance, address it directly or through your child's teacher.

If you find that your child is saying mean things to another child, don't let it go. Take the opportunity to talk about how bad people feel when they get teased. Set a consequence for mean teasing to show your child that you will not accept it.

Be aware of the way that you feel and speak about your own body. Learning to accept and feel good about your own body will set a good example for your children.

- **Let your kids have a say in choosing their clothes and hairstyle.** This will allow them to feel that they have some control over their own body. Help them choose clothing that is comfortable, fits well and allows them to move freely, have fun and enjoy all the things their body can do.

Talk with a doctor, nutritionist, Public Health Nurse or nurse practitioner if you have concerns about a child's weight, growth or body image.



Stress

As parents, most of us have some stress in our lives. We feel the pressures of raising children, of too little money, of too much to do, too little time and not enough help.

Children have stress in their lives, too. Starting school is exciting, but it's also stressful. It takes a while to get used to new people, new rules and new routines.

As adults, we need to learn ways to handle the stress in our own lives. We need to find ways to relax, to slow down, to figure out what's causing our stress and find a way to deal with it. We need to learn to talk about what's bothering us and not bottle up our feelings.

We need to teach our children to do these things, too. Helping your children learn to manage stress will give them skills they can use all their lives.

What are the signs of stress?

In children, the signs of stress can be physical or behavioural. Nearly all children have some of these signs from time to time. Check with a doctor to be sure there is no physical cause for them. If your child is in good health and the symptoms don't go away, stress may be the cause.

Physical signs of stress:

- Headaches, stomach aches
- Trembling, nervous tics and twitches
- Teeth grinding (You may not see the grinding, but your child may complain of a sore jaw.)
- Becoming more clumsy or accident-prone
- Having to urinate often or wetting the bed

Behavioural signs of stress:

- Crankiness
- Doesn't feel like doing anything
- Anxiety, nervousness
- Poor eating habits
- Watches TV all the time and doesn't want to do anything else
- Has trouble sleeping or has nightmares

How can I help my children learn to handle stress?

The best way to help children deal with stress is to listen to them, love them and respect them. When children have a warm, loving family to come home to, they find it much easier to handle life's ups and downs.

When your child is feeling stressed:

- **Find out what's causing the stress.**

Talk with your child. Find out why your child is upset. Listen to what he or she has to say.

For example:

- "Tommy never wants to play with me anymore."
- "I'm bad at sports."

- **Help pinpoint the problem.**

When you talk it through, it may turn out that your child is making a small problem into a big crisis. Children can need help to keep things in perspective.

For example:

- Tommy has started taking music lessons after school on Tuesdays. Tommy and your child used to play on Tuesdays. Help your child see that the problem isn't that Tommy never wants to play, but that he can't play at that particular time anymore.
- Your child didn't get picked to play basketball on the school team. Help her see that this doesn't mean she's bad at all sports or even that she's bad at basketball. The problem is that lots of kids try out but only a few get picked.

- **Help your child think about what to do.** Once you've sorted out the problem together, help your child find a way to handle it.

For example:

- If Tommy can't play on Tuesday afternoon anymore, maybe he could come to play on Wednesday, or come home for lunch with your child once in a while.
- If your child can't play on the school team, maybe there's another basketball team she can play on. Or maybe she'd like to try another kind of team. Or take lessons in another sport, like swimming or karate. Or maybe she'd like to do something completely different. Every child is good at something. Help your child find his or her special skills.

If you feel that your child needs more help in handling stress than you are able to give, talk with your doctor or contact the local mental health clinic.

Being Active

Many children do not get as much physical activity as they need to grow and be healthy. On average, Canadian children spend 26 hours a week watching TV and another 30 hours in school. This doesn't count the time many children spend playing video games.

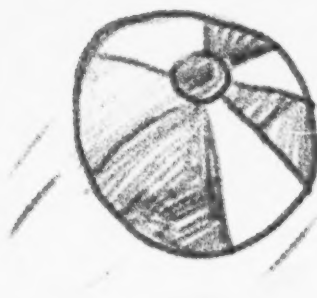
Being moderately active at least 60 minutes a day AND vigorously active 30 minutes a day helps kids in many ways. Regular physical activity:

- Increases self-esteem
- Helps kids feel better physically and mentally
- Helps children become more skillful at sports and physical activities
- Gives kids positive things to do in their spare time and keeps them from being bored

By encouraging children to be active, parents can start a pattern that continues throughout their children's lives.

To help your children be active:

- Encourage your child to be active on a regular basis.
- Set a good example by being physically active yourself.
- Limit the amount of time children spend watching television and playing video or computer games.
- Plan family activities around physical activity.
 - Walk or bicycle together instead of driving.
 - Make active chores like vacuuming and mowing the lawn fun by doing them together.
 - Give your child time and opportunities to play outside.
 - Include fun physical activities and games in family events such as birthday parties, picnics, and vacations.
- Make it easy for children to participate in school and community physical activity and sports programs.
- Work in your community to improve the quality and availability of school and community physical activity programs.

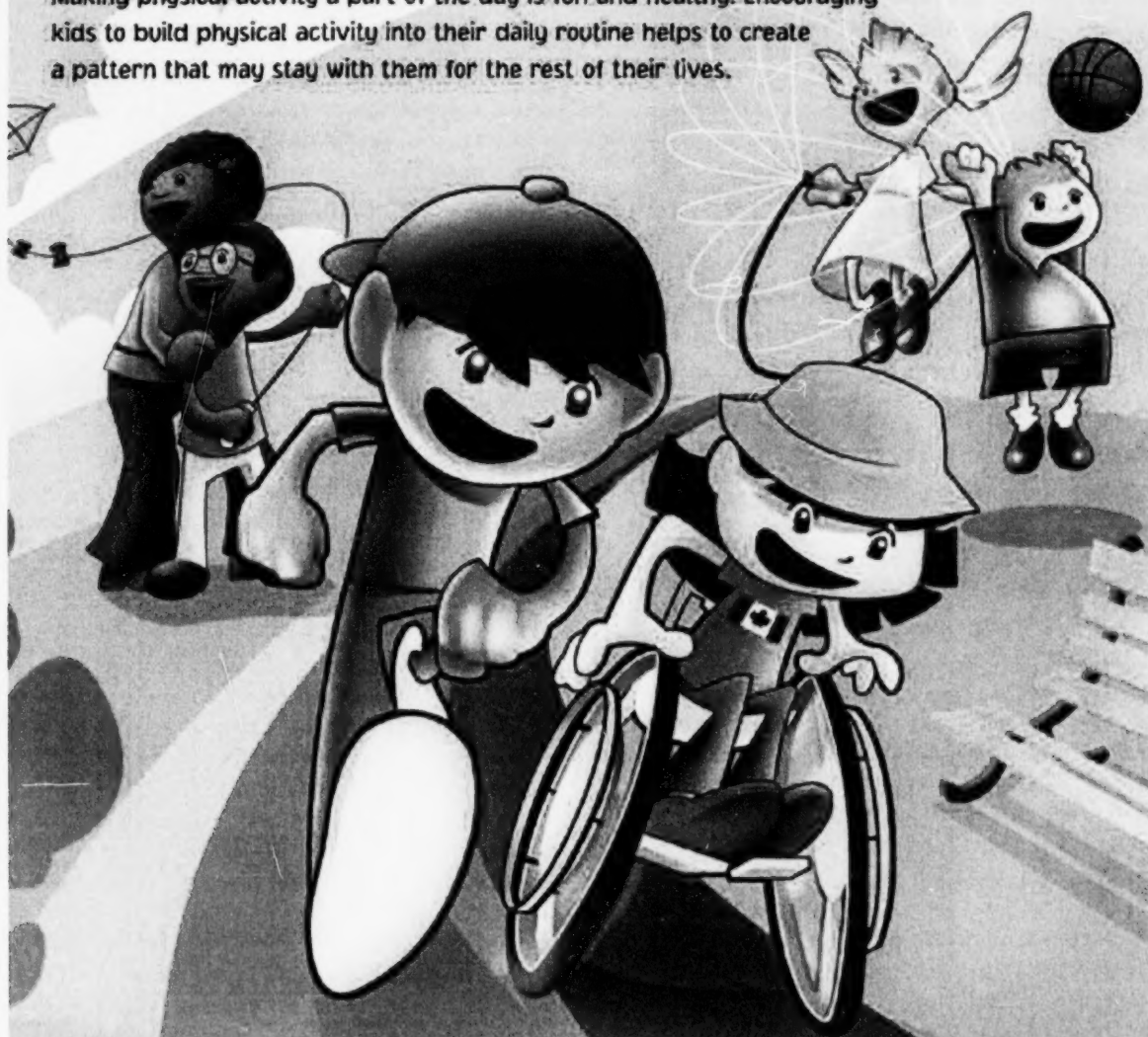


CANADA'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDE FOR CHILDREN

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS FUN!

- At home • At school • At play • Inside or outside
- On the way to and from school • With family and friends

Making physical activity a part of the day is fun and healthy. Encouraging kids to build physical activity into their daily routine helps to create a pattern that may stay with them for the rest of their lives.



Health
Canada

Santé
Canada

The College of
Family Physicians
of Canada



Canadian Society for
Exercise Physiology

CALL TO ACTION

for parents, educators,
physicians and
community leaders



Canada's Guidelines for INCREASING Physical Activity in Children

This Guide will help children:

- **INCREASE** time **CURRENTLY** spent on physical activity, starting with 30 minutes **MORE** per day
(See CHART BELOW)
- **REDUCE** "non active" time spent on TV, video, computer games and surfing the Internet, starting with 30 minutes **LESS** per day
(See CHART BELOW)

Build up physical activity throughout the day in periods of at least 5 to 10 minutes

	Daily INCREASE in moderate* physical activity (Minutes)		Daily INCREASE in vigorous** physical activity (Minutes)		Total Daily INCREASE in physical activity (Minutes)	Daily DECREASE in non-active time (Minutes)
Month 1	at least 20	+	10	=	30	30
Month 2	at least 30	+	15	=	45	45
Month 3	at least 40	+	20	=	60	60
Month 4	at least 50	+	25	=	75	75
Month 5	at least 60	+	30	=	90	90

* Moderate physical activity examples

- brisk walking • swimming
- skating • playing outdoors
- bike riding

** Vigorous physical activity examples

- running • soccer

**Congratulations! Daily active time
is part of a healthy lifestyle.**



Endurance Flexibility Strength

All contribute to a healthy body

Combine 3 types of physical activity for best results:

1. Endurance activities that strengthen the heart and lungs such as running, jumping and swimming.

2. Flexibility activities that encourage children to bend, stretch and reach such as gymnastics and dancing.

3. Strength building activities that build strong muscles and bones such as climbing or swinging across the playground ladder.



The Benefits of Regular Activity

- Builds strong bones and strengthens muscles
- Maintains flexibility
- Achieves a healthy weight
- Promotes good posture and balance
- Improves fitness
- Meet new friends
- Strengthens the heart
- Improves physical self-esteem
- Increases relaxation
- Enhances healthy growth and development

Here are some activities to try with children

- ☞ Take stairs instead of elevators
- ☞ Take a walk after supper – and make the walk an adventure
- ☞ Play ball or ball hockey or soccer or go swimming
- ☞ Ride a bike or scooter
- ☞ Rake the leaves, shovel snow or carry groceries together
- ☞ Toboggan or ski or build a 'snowman'
- ☞ Organize neighborhood games to help kids make active choices
- ☞ Dance, dance, dance
- ☞ Play sports of any kind
- ☞ Bring the kids outdoors to play
- ☞ Work with the neighbours to create a walking 'school bus'
- ☞ Leave the car at home when going on short trips



For more information:
Call 1 888 334-4764 or visit the web-site
at www.healthcanada.ca/paguide.
Please use this Guide with additional
support resources.

Active bodies need energy.
Follow *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*
to make wise food choices



www.healthcanada.ca/foodguide

**Healthy
activity is safe
activity**



Canada



© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2002
Cat.H34-011/2002-2E ISBN 0-662-31432-X

Discipline

Discipline is not just another word for punishment. Discipline means teaching children to behave. It means helping them to learn what you expect them to do and how you expect them to act.

There's a lot you can do to help your children learn to behave.

Make rules and stick to them.

- **Make as few rules as possible and repeat them often. Be sure your children understand what the rules are and what they mean.**

For example:

"You are allowed to ride your bike but only if you wear your helmet and it is buckled properly. It is not safe to ride your bike without wearing a helmet that is properly buckled."

- **Tell your children what will happen if they break the rules.**

For example:

"If you ride your bike without wearing your helmet and buckling it properly, you won't be able to ride your bike for a week."



- **Follow through. Let your children live with the results if they break the rules.**

For example:

"You know the rule. You rode your bike without your helmet buckled properly so you can't ride your bike for a week. We'll try again next week."

Praise them when they follow the rules or do what they're supposed to do.

- **Don't wait until they break a rule to notice them.**

For example:

"I was watching you ride your bike today. You're getting better at it all the time. And your helmet was buckled properly. Nice going!"

Set a good example.

- **Children learn almost everything by watching what other people do.** This means that they can learn from your bad example just as well as from your good example.

For example:

- If you want your kids to be polite to others, let them see you saying "Please" and "Thank you."
- If you want your kids to be kind and to share with others, let them see you being kind and sharing.

What can I do if they don't behave?

When children misbehave, you can try:

- Taking away a treat or a privilege
- Sending them to their room or a quiet place for a short time
- Explaining what you didn't like about their behaviour

One thing you should NOT do when children misbehave is spank them. Spanking does not teach good behaviour. It teaches children to be afraid of and dislike the person who hits them.

When you talk with your children about their misbehaviour, make sure they understand that while you're not happy about what they did (or didn't) do, you will always love them.

For example:

- Say: *"I asked you to take out the trash. I'm disappointed that you haven't done it. Please take it out now."*
- DON'T say: *"You didn't take out the trash. Are you too stupid to remember anything?"*

Remember, nobody's perfect. No parent does everything right all the time. All parents have times when they do or say something they're sorry for. We all make mistakes, and we can all learn from our mistakes.

When you do or say something you wish you hadn't, apologize to your child.

For example:

- Say: *"I'm sorry I yelled at you. Let's try again."*

Your children always deserve another chance and so do you.

Talking to Your Kids About Sexuality

Sexuality is much more than sex. It includes our sense of who we are and how we feel about ourselves as sexual beings.

As a parent, you are your children's first and most important sexuality educator. You teach your child by what you do and say. The tone of your voice and the feelings you express are as important as the words you use.

You have a wonderful opportunity to help your child grow up to be a loving, caring, sexually healthy adult.

It's not unusual for parents to feel uncomfortable talking with their children about sexuality. You may find it difficult if you grew up with negative messages or confusing information about sexuality. Teaching your children about sexuality is an important part of their healthy development.

Why parents need to teach their children about sexuality

- **Children are curious about sexuality.** Children are naturally curious about themselves and others. This may lead to sex play with other children. They are learning the differences between boys and girls—and what's the same. Most sex play is normal.
- **Children see things around them that are confusing.** As children grow, they learn about sexuality from many sources—for example, friends, TV, movies, Internet, video games and school.
- **Children need to learn their family and cultural values.** Schools don't teach values. As your child learns to read and becomes more independent, you have less control over what they hear and see. It is important to find out what your child is learning in school, from friends and the media. Discuss your values and your feelings about the sexual messages they get from the world around them. Teach your child what is appropriate and acceptable behaviour for their age.

If you find conflict between what your child is learning outside your home and your family's values you may want to reaffirm your own values with your child. You may find it helpful to talk to your family doctor, your child's school or Public Health staff.

- **Children need to learn the words to use when talking about sexuality and their body.** It is important to give your child correct words for all parts of the body. Teach them socially acceptable and commonly understood words—for example, penis, testicles, vulva and vagina. These are words they will keep using when they start school.

Children start learning about sexuality from the time they are born—and they keep learning about it for the rest of their life. When you welcome their questions, children learn that they can come to you when something is confusing instead of turning to sources that may not give accurate or caring answers.

How to talk to your child about sexuality

- **Find a time and place that is comfortable** for you and your child to talk such as at bedtime or when you are walking together. Find your own words, to fit your needs and those of your child.
- **Look for opportunities or teachable moments.** Answer whenever a child asks a question—even if the reply is, “Good question. We can talk about that later.” (Don’t forget to talk about it!) When there is an opportunity—take it. You might start a discussion about something you see on TV, if you see a pregnant woman, or if a pet has babies.

Remember that some children will ask questions but others will hesitate—you may need to start the conversation or ask the questions.

- **Acknowledge when you feel uncomfortable, embarrassed or you don’t know an answer.** It’s okay to feel this way, and it’s okay to say you don’t know something.

- **Take time to think about how to answer a child’s question.** This could be a few minutes or a few days, as long as you help your child get an answer. You may want to talk with another adult about how you might answer a difficult question. If you aren’t satisfied with the information you give or the way you handle a situation, explain this to your child and start again.

- **Be honest.** If you give your child misinformation, sooner or later your child will learn that you didn’t tell the truth. Your child could be embarrassed if he or she repeats incorrect information in front of others who then make fun of him or her. *“Remember when I told you that condoms are a type of balloon? Well, condoms are really used by people to keep from having a baby or getting an infection.”*

- **Be consistent.** If two parents are raising the child, make sure you talk over what you want to say. Conflicting messages can be confusing.

When you talk to your child:

- **Make your answers short and simple.** You do not need to know everything about sexuality to teach your child what he or she wants to know. You can find out any information you don’t know.
- **Be clear about what your child really wants to know before you answer.**
Child: *“Where do babies come from?”*
Parent: *“Do you want to know where they grow?”*
- **Find out how much your child already knows.**
Child: *“What does ‘rape’ mean?”*
Parent: *“What do you think it means?”*

- **Clear up any wrong information your child may have.**
Child: *"I grew in Mommy's stomach."*
Parent: *"You grew in Mommy's uterus, dear."*
- **Give information using words and ideas they can understand at their age.** For example, if a four-year-old child asks, *"Where do babies come from?"* you could reply, *"Babies are usually made by a man and a woman and grow in a special place in a woman's body called a 'uterus'."*

Where to go for more information

You can get more information about talking to your kids about sexuality from your local Public Health Services office. If you have questions, you can ask for the booklet *"Talk Sex"* or you can talk with a Public Health Nurse. The addresses of these offices are listed in the back of this booklet.

Safety

Starting school makes your child's world more exciting and much bigger. Starting school also makes safety a much bigger issue because there is greater chance of your child being injured.

Safety is everyone's concern. As a parent, you need to be aware of safety risks so that you can teach your child safety rules. You also need to set a good example by following safety rules yourself. For example, if you drive onto the school grounds, or even near the school grounds, you need to be extra careful.

It's a good idea for parents to take a basic first aid course. There are also first aid courses for children. Contact your local St. John Ambulance or Red Cross for information about what's available where you live.

Booster Seats in cars, vans, trucks and SUVs
In Nova Scotia, the law says that children who have outgrown their child car seat must use a booster seat until they are 9 years old or 145 cm (4 ft. 9 in.) tall. It's safest if children stay in the booster seat until they are 145 cm (4 ft. 9 in.) tall, even if they are older than 9. Children must be a minimum of 18 kg (40 pounds) before they can start using a booster seat. Children who are under 18 kg (40 pounds) must use a child seat with harnessing.

Adult seat belts in cars, vans, trucks and SUV's are too big for a child's small body. Booster seats lift children up so that the seat belt fits safely over their body. When in a booster seat the shoulder belt crosses the middle of your child's chest. Your child could be hurt or killed if the shoulder belt is behind their back or under their arm. The lap belt should be low and snug over the hips. Booster Seats can only be used in seating positions with a lap and shoulder belt, and never in a side facing seat.

There are two kinds of Booster Seats:

- **High Back:** These seats support the child's head in cars with low-backed seats.
- **Backless:** These have just a seat. They are safe in cars with high-back seats.

Children should use a booster seat until the middle of their ears is above the top of the car's seat or the back of the high-back booster seat. If your child outgrows their booster seat before they reach 145 cm (4 ft. 9 in.), it's time for a taller booster seat to stay safe.

Children are ready for an adult seat belt when:

- They are AT LEAST 145 cm (4 ft. 9 in.) tall or have a seated height of 74 cm (29 in.).
- The lap belt stays low across their hips — not their abdomen — when seated on the car's seat.
- The shoulder belt fits across the middle of their chest (between the neck and the end of the shoulder) when seated on the car's seat.
- They are tall enough for their legs to bend over the edge of the car's seat while they are sitting up straight on the car's seat.
- They can sit (on the car's seat) with their back flat against the seat without slouching.

When driving in a car, van, truck or SUV, the safest spot for a child is in the back seat.

If you must put your child in the front seat, turn off the airbag.

To find out if it's okay to use a car seat in the front seat of your car:

- Check your owner's manual
- Call your car's manufacturer
- Call Transport Canada at 1-800-333-0510 or go to their website:
www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety (Click on "Child Safety")

Even after children have outgrown car and booster seats, it's safest if they stay in the back seat until they're 13.

For more information about car seat safety contact the Child Safety Link, at 1-866-288-1388 (toll free) or 470-6496 or visit their website at www.childsafetylink.ca.

(Adapted from Take the Booster Seat YES Test, Calgary Health Region)

Bike Safety

Make sure your children have a good strong bike, approved safety gear and know the rules for safe biking. Check with your local police or RCMP to find out about current standards and safety rules. Check with your school to find out their policy on riding bikes to school.

Kids should:

- Have a safe bicycle.
Children's bikes should be the right size for them and should be checked often to make sure all parts are in good working order.
- Have safe gear.
In Nova Scotia anyone riding a bicycle is required by law to wear a bicycle helmet. Children must wear a C.S.A., ASTM or SNELL approved helmet and always wear footwear while biking. (Parents must wear a helmet, too!)
- Know safety rules.
Make sure your children participate in bike rodeos to improve their skills. Go over safety rules with them to make sure they remember them.
- Ride in a safe place.
Children age 9 and under should not be allowed to ride a bike alone on a street. Children over age 9 should ride only on streets with little traffic.

Playground Safety

As with bike safety, playground safety depends on having safe equipment and following the rules. Check the playground at your child's school and bring any problems to the school's attention.

Safe playground equipment

- Playground equipment should be firmly attached to the ground. It should be in good repair and should be checked regularly. If the equipment is rusty or broken, report this to whoever is in charge of the playground and find another place to play until the problem is solved.
- The ground around all playground equipment should be soft, not packed down and hard. Rubber, wood chips, pea gravel or sand make a good surface. There should never be concrete or asphalt around playground equipment.
- Playgrounds should be clean. This means no animal dirt, broken glass or garbage.

Teach your child safe playground rules

- Take turns
- No pushing or shoving
- On the swing:
 - one person per swing
 - sit in the middle of the seat
 - hold on with both hands
 - never walk near a moving swing

- On the slide:
 - move away from the bottom after your turn
 - climb up the ladder, not up the slide
- On the teeter-totter:
 - sit down and hold on. Don't stand
 - don't hop off without telling the person on the other side

Skateboards and Rollerblades

Skateboards and rollerblades are best kept for at-home play. School — and the road to and from school — are not the safest places for them.

Poison Prevention

Did you know:

- Each year the IWK Regional Poison Control Centre receives over 10,000 calls. More than half of these calls involve children under 16.
- The average household has as many as 250 poisons. These include things like cleaners, pills, medicines, cosmetics, cigarettes, plants, paints, solvents and craft and art supplies.
- The top 3 products related to poisonings are pain relievers, cleaning products and sedatives.
- Most childhood poisonings can be prevented.

Caution: It is not safe for children to wear scarves and drawstrings on clothing on the playground. These can catch on playground equipment and strangle children. Children should also be told not to tie ropes to playground equipment and to remove their helmets before using playground equipment.

To poison-proof your home:

- **Learn to identify poisons in your home.**
Learn to recognize the symbols for poisons, explosives and corrosive or flammable products. Teach your children to recognize these symbols, too. Check with a greenhouse or plant nursery, or with the IWK Regional Poison Control Centre, to find out if any of the plants in or around your home are poisonous.
- **Keep poisons out of reach of children.**
Keep poisons locked away where children can't reach them. This may require a lot of thought. You need to try to think like a child, and be several steps ahead. For example, children find poisons in purses, coat pockets, glove compartments, in medicine cabinets, in the garage, in the basement or under the kitchen sink. They taste cleaners, chew on art supplies and eat plants. They try to spray on perfume and get it in their eyes. Poisons are best stored in a high, locked cupboard.

In an emergency call 911 or the IWK Regional Poison Centre at 1-800-565-8161 or 470-8161.

Protect Your Children From Second-Hand Smoke

It's important for your children's health that you protect them from second-hand smoke.

Many children have no choice but to breathe second-hand smoke at home, in cars or in public places. This is even more dangerous for children than for adults because children are more sensitive to the poisons in second-hand smoke. They also breathe faster than adults. This means that children take in more air and more of the poisons in the second-hand smoke.

You may not realize just how bad second-smoke is for children.

- Besides nicotine, cigarette smoke contains other poisonous and cancer-causing chemicals, including cyanide, ammonia, lead and tar. Two-thirds of the smoke from a cigarette is NOT inhaled by the smoker. This "sidestream" smoke from the burning end of the cigarette is the most dangerous part.
- Children who are exposed to second-hand smoke are more likely to suffer from asthma, allergies and middle ear infections. They are also more likely to get other lung diseases and health problems, including cancer and heart disease.

In Nova Scotia, it is illegal to smoke in a car with children present. Second-hand smoke in cars is even more dangerous than second-hand smoke indoors. The smoke in a car builds up quickly, even with the window down. Smoking in the small space inside a car is 23 times more toxic than smoking in a home.

Air exchangers and open windows will not protect your child from second-hand smoke. The only way to protect your child is to make sure no one smokes in your home or your car.

Ask others who care about your child not to smoke in their home when your child is there. Remind them that it's illegal to smoke in their car when a child is present. For information on making your home smoke free visit the Smoke Free, Around Me website at www.smokefreearoundme.ca or contact your local Public Health Services office.

All children deserve to be protected from tobacco smoke!

Preventing Smoking

Did you know:

- Every year, 1,600 Nova Scotians die from the effects of smoking.
- Nicotine is so addictive that 8 out of 10 people who try smoking get hooked.

Taking steps now to prevent your children from ever starting to smoke, is one of the healthiest things you can do for them.

What you say and do about smoking can encourage and support your children's decision to be smoke-free.

To keep your children from smoking:

- **Be a non-smoker yourself.** Your example is your children's most powerful teacher. If you smoke, quit now. You can find out about "stop smoking" programs from your doctor, local Public Health Services office or local Addiction Services.
- **Be honest with your children about the risks smokers take.** If you smoke, talk with your children about how hard it is to stop smoking. If you've tried to stop in the past, and failed, tell them how difficult it was for you.
- **Help your children to say "no" to smoking.** Talk with them about the advertising they'll see and the pressure they might get from friends to try smoking. Help them learn ways to say "No."
- **Respect anti-smoking laws.** Your attitude towards smoking affects your children's attitude. If you respect rules about not smoking in hospitals, schools, workplaces, vehicles with children present and other public spaces, your children will learn to respect these laws (and other laws, too). It's also important that you respect, and teach your children to respect, the laws that make it illegal to sell tobacco products to people under 19.

- **Support efforts by your children's school to prevent smoking.** Many schools have programs to help kids keep from smoking. The risks of smoking are also covered in health education classes. Many schools are using the Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection "Smoke-Free for Life" Curriculum Supplement for grades primary to nine.

Sun Protection

Preventing sunburn in childhood can make it much less likely that children will develop skin cancer later in life.

If your child is taking medication, check with your doctor or pharmacist before allowing him or her to go out in the sun. Choose clothing that is loose fitting, tight woven and light weight. Some kinds of medication can make children very sensitive to the sun. If your child is sensitive to the sun, be sure to let the school know.

Good sense in the sun:

- **Use a sunscreen all year round.**
 - Choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen that is SPF 15 or higher. Read the label to be sure it screens out both kinds of ultraviolet rays: ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB). NEVER use baby oil as a sunscreen.
 - Apply sunscreen carefully. Pay special attention to the face, ears, nose and the tops of the feet.
 - Apply sunscreen BEFORE your children go outside. Between 15 and 20 minutes before going out is best.
 - Reapply sunscreen at least every 2 hours while your children are playing outside. You should also reapply after swimming or exercising that makes them perspire.

- **Dress to protect.** Don't depend on sunscreen alone to protect your children.
 - Be sure children wear a wide brimmed hat, shirt and pants while playing outdoors. Choose clothing that is loose fitting, tight woven and light weight.
 - Remember that sheer clothing will allow the sun to pass through.
- **Watch the time of day.**
 - Children should not play unprotected in the sun between 11 AM and 4 PM or when the UV index is 3 or more. The sun is most dangerous during these times.
 - Encourage kids to play in the shade, especially between 11 AM and 4 PM or when the UV index is 3 or more.
- **Be careful on cloudy days, too.**
 - Even on cloudy days, most of the sun's rays reach the ground. You can get a serious sunburn on a cloudy day.
 - You can also get a sunburn from sunlight reflecting from snow, water or sand.
- **Wear sunglasses**
Sunglasses can help prevent eye damage by blocking a large amount of ultraviolet rays. Choose sunglasses with: even shading, medium to dark lenses (grey, brown or green tint), and UV-A and UV-B protection

Sun safety means:

- Wearing clothes that cover arms and legs
- Wearing a wide-brim hat
- Using a sunscreen that is SPF 15 or higher
- Wearing sunglasses with UV-A and UV-B protection.



Preventing the Spread of Illness

Hand Washing

Hand washing is the most important way to help children stay healthy and prevent the spread of illness. Children should learn to wash their hands often and well, especially before eating and after using the toilet. Teach your children at home, so they will be able to wash properly at school.

To wash hands well:

1. **WET** hands under warm running water.
2. **SCRUB** with soap. Slowly count for 5 to 10 seconds while scrubbing.
3. **LOOK** to be sure all parts of your hand are clean. Check the backs, between the fingers and under the nails.
4. **RINSE** under running water. Slowly count for 5 to 10 seconds while rinsing.
5. **DRY**.

Teach your children to wash their hands:

- **Before** - eating
- **After** - using the toilet
 - playing outdoors
 - playing with pets, especially with reptiles like snakes, lizards and turtles
 - visiting someone who is sick
 - coughing or sneezing

Help Stop Illness from Spreading

Illnesses can spread easily among children who spend time together in a classroom. In addition to teaching your children how and when to wash their hands, there are several other things you can do to help prevent the spread of illness.

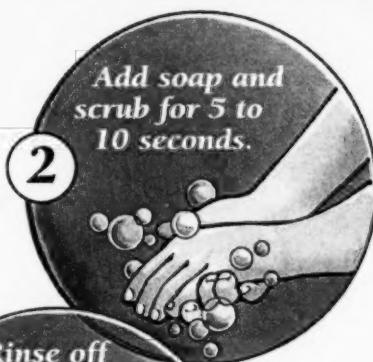
- **Cough and sneeze into your arm or sleeve.**
Tissues can be used to cover coughs and sneezes but be sure to wash your hands after throwing out the tissue.
- **Do not share drinking glasses, water bottles, mouth guards, food or eating utensils.**
- **If you are sick, stay home from work or school.**
If children are sick, keep them home from their child care facility/family home day care. Avoid close contact with others until you are feeling well and able to resume normal day-to-day activities.

Common signs of sickness are:

- Changes in behaviour. A change in a child's behaviour is a clear sign that he or she is not well.
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Rash
- Coughing up coloured phlegm

Many childhood illnesses — like colds, flu, chicken pox, measles and mumps — are caused by viruses. Most children who have an illness caused by a virus will feel much better after a few days of rest, good food and lots of liquids.

Hand Washing!



Wash all parts of your hands:

- the backs
- between fingers
- under nails
- thumbs

Wash your hands:

- Before eating
- After using the toilet
- Before, during and after cooking
- After changing diapers
- After handling soiled items such as bed linen, commodes, clothing, and toys.
- After petting animals

Washing your hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the spread of germs.

Public Health Services

NOVA SCOTIA
Health Promotion
and Protection

When children have been home sick, you need to be sure they stay home until they are well enough that they won't pass the illness to other children when they return to school. If your child gets any contagious disease you should tell you school and/or your local Public Health Services office.

Facts about Some Common Childhood Illnesses

When your children start school, you may find that you're hearing about childhood illnesses that are new to you. This section offers some information to help you deal with some of the most common illnesses.

One question many parents have is how to tell the difference between a cold and the flu. These are not the same illness. The flu is usually more serious.

A cold and the flu have several of the same symptoms: runny, stuffy nose, sneezing, sore throat and coughing. The big difference is that a child with the flu will also have a high fever that can last 3 or 4 days, a headache, body aches and will often feel very weak and tired.

A cold is usually over sooner than the flu — a child with the flu can be sick for as long as 10 days.

Facts About Some Childhood Disease			
Disease	Symptoms	When can it spread?	How long should children stay home from school?
Chicken Pox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rash • Red spots that fill with fluid, then become crusty over a few days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicken pox can spread starting 1 to 2 days before the rash appears. It can be spread until the last spot crusts over. • Chicken pox is spread by direct contact with blisters and by fluid from the nose and throat that is carried through the air. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should stay at home until all the spots have dried and crusted over or 5 days after the first spots appear.
German Measles (Rubella)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low fever • Runny nose • Rash spread over the body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubella can spread from 1 week before until at least 4 days after the rash begins to show. • Rubella is spread by direct contact with discharge from the nose and throat of someone who has rubella. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should stay at home until 7 days after the rash appears.

Facts About Some Childhood Disease

Disease	Symptoms	When can it spread?	How long should children stay home from school?
Mononucleosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Sore throat • Swollen glands • Tiredness • Skin rash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mono can spread for up to a year through fluids from the throat, through direct contact or through germs carried in the air. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See a doctor if you think your child has mono. • Children should stay at home until they feel well. Your doctor will let you know when your child can go back to school.
Mumps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Tender, swollen glands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mumps can spread from 6 to 7 days before symptoms appear until 9 days after they appear. • Mumps are spread through direct contact with the saliva of someone who has mumps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should stay at home for 9 days after symptoms appear.
Fifth Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very red rash on cheeks (Cheeks can look like they have been slapped) • 1-4 days later a red, lace-like rash appears • Rash lasts 1 – 3 weeks and becomes brighter in sunlight or heat • Fever • Headache • Bodyache • Sore throat • Runny nose • Child often does not feel sick 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before rash appears • Spread by contact with nose and throat discharge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children may attend school if they feel well enough to take part in activities. • Pregnant women who have been in contact with someone who has Fifth Disease should contact their doctor.

Facts About Some Childhood Disease

Disease	Symptoms	When can it spread?	How long should children stay home from school?
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cough with a crowing or whooping sound when the child breathes in. This cough can last for up to 3 months. • Clear, thick mucous • Runny nose that lasts for 1 to 2 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whooping cough can spread from 1 to 2 weeks before the cough starts until 5 days after treatment with antibiotics has begun. If no treatment is given, it can spread for 3 weeks after the cough begins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See a doctor if you think your child has whooping cough. • Unless Public Health or a doctor advises them to stay home, children may continue going to school if they feel well enough.
Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Scratchy" or painful eyes • Watery eyes • Discharge from eye 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pink eye can spread as long as the child has it. • It is spread by contact with the discharge for the eyes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See a doctor if you think your child has pink eye. • Children should stay home for 24 hours after treatment with antibiotic eye drops or ointment is started. Children can remain in school if no treatment is required.
Scarlet Fever (Scarletina, a mild form of Scarlet Fever)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Sore throat • Fine rash • Blotches appear when you press on the skin • Skin feels rough, like sand paper • Flushed cheeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Scarlet Fever is treated by a doctor, it can spread for between 24 and 48 hours. If it isn't treated, it can spread for between 10 and 21 days • Scarlet Fever is spread by direct contact and by germs carried in the air. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See a doctor if you think your child has Scarlet Fever. • Children should stay at home until 24 hours after the start of treatment.

Facts About Some Childhood Disease

Disease	Symptoms	When can it spread?	How long should children stay home from school?
Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Sore throat • Lack of energy • Small, painful blisters in the mouth • Skin rash, often with blisters, usually on hands and feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreads by direct contact with saliva or feces of an infected person • Spreads through the air as well as by direct touch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children may continue going to school if they feel well enough.

Head Lice

What are head lice?

Head lice are tiny insects that live in the hair, close to the scalp. Lice lay eggs — called nits — that stick to strands of hair very close to the scalp.

There are many myths about head lice but the truth is that:

- Anyone can get head lice. It has nothing to do with whether you're clean or dirty.
- Head lice DO NOT carry diseases and do not make people sick.

What do head lice look like?

Head lice are small and may be difficult to see. They have a flat, grayish-brown body with six legs. They do not have wings and cannot fly. It is often easier to see the nits (lice eggs). Nits are shaped like tiny teardrops and have a brownish-white colour. Nits are firmly attached (glued) to a strand of hair and will not move unless you pull them from the hair with a nit comb or your fingernails.

How do lice spread?

Head lice do not jump or fly between people. They spread very quickly:

- When someone's hair touches the hair of a person who has lice
- By sharing personal items or clothing with a person who has head lice. These include things like combs, brushes, barrettes, towels, hats, scarves and pillowcases.

Can I prevent it?

To prevent head lice:

- Teach your children not to share personal items that are used on the head. This means things like brushes, combs, barrettes, headbands, elastics, towels, hats, helmets, toques and scarves.
- Teach your children to put their hats and scarves in their coat sleeves or backpacks when they take them off at school.
- Keep long hair tied back or braided.
- Check your child's head regularly:
 - once a week as part of your routine
 - after every sleepover
 - every day during lice outbreaks at school

You'll find directions on how to check for head lice in the back of this book.

What should I do if my child gets head lice?

The keys to controlling head lice are:

- Two treatments, 7 – 10 days apart, for every family member who has lice
- Daily lice combing between treatments
- Careful checking of everyone who has been in close contact with someone who has head lice
- Cleaning personal and household items that someone with lice may have used

You'll find detailed information on how to treat head lice in the back of this book. If you have questions or need more information, contact your local Public Health Services office.

Head lice are easy to catch. If any of your children have head lice, notify their friends' parents, their school and any groups they participate in — like brownies, cubs or sports teams.

Your child can usually return to school after the first treatment has been completed, but you should check with the school to be sure about their policy. Let your child's teacher know that the head lice have been treated.

Scabies or The Itch**What is scabies?**

Scabies — sometimes called the "itch" — is a contagious skin infection. It is caused by a tiny bug, called the itch mite, that can only be seen under a microscope. Mites can burrow under the skin and lay eggs. This burrowing causes the scabies infection.

What does a scabies infection look like?

Scabies is a fine, red, itchy rash. It may infect the entire body, but it usually shows up between fingers, or on the wrists or forearms, on the tummy, or on the inside of the thighs. Scabies can infect any part of the body. The rash is very itchy and uncomfortable. It always feels worse at night. Too much scratching may cause a more serious skin infection.

How is scabies spread?

Scabies is spread by close personal contact with an infected person, usually by hand-to-hand contact. It may also be transmitted through contact with articles of clothing, bedding, or towels used by the infected person. Scabies is very easy to catch. Outbreaks of scabies are common in schools and daycares. When one family member has scabies, it is likely that everyone in the family will catch it too.

How long does a scabies infection last?

Untreated, scabies can infect the entire body and an infected person can infect others. Proper treatment will get rid of the scabies mites almost immediately, and the rash and itching will disappear within a week.

Can I prevent scabies?

Scabies is difficult to prevent. One reason for this is that you can be infected with scabies mites for 2 to 6 weeks before a rash appears. Scabies can be spread during this time. To help prevent scabies, you can:

- Avoid contact with people who have scabies.
- Teach your children not to borrow or lend clothing and other personal items.

What should I do if my child gets it?

- If you think your child has scabies, he or she should stay home from school until it is properly treated.
- See your family doctor or Public Health Nurse. Follow treatment directions carefully. The rash and itching will disappear within 2 to 3 weeks. All family members should be treated whether they show symptoms or not. A second treatment may be needed 7 to 10 days after the first.
- The Department of Health Promotion and Protection recommends one application of a cream containing 5% Permethrin, such as NIX™. The cream should be left on for only 8 to 14 hours and then washed off. Follow the directions on the cream exactly as written.

- If any family members are under 2 years of age or if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, check with their doctor before treating for scabies.
- Wash all clothing, bedding and towels your child has used within the 2 days before being treated for scabies. Machine wash in hot water and dry for at least 20 minutes on the hot cycle of the dryer.
- Notify your child's school. Your child may have caught scabies at school and other parents need to be on the lookout for it.
- Itching may last for a short while after treatment. This is normal and does not mean that the treatment did not work. Treatment can be repeated 7 to 10 days after the first one, but only if a new scabies rash appears.

If my child gets scabies, when can he or she go back to school?

- Your child can usually return to school 24 hours after scabies treatment is properly completed.
- To be sure that the treatment has been successful, see your doctor or Public Health Nurse.

Ringworm:

What is ringworm?

Ringworm is a skin infection caused by a fungus (not by worms!)

What does it look like?

Ringworm appears on the scalp, skin or nails. Ringworm usually starts as a small blister and then spreads to a larger, ring-shaped patch. This patch will be scaly and may be raised around the edge. It is usually quite itchy and flaky. If ringworm is on the scalp, there may be a bald spot around the infection. If it occurs on the feet, it may cause cracking between the toes.

How does it spread?

Ringworm spreads through skin-to-skin contact with a person who has it, from animals or from soil. You can also get ringworm by using the clothing, combs, brushes, bedding or towels of an infected person.

Can I prevent it?

- Avoid close contact with anyone who has ringworm.
- Check your children's heads for signs of ringworm.
- Check pets and farm animals for signs of ringworm. (Be aware that pets and farm animals can have ringworm without showing any signs of infection.) Teach your children to wash their hands after playing with animals.
- Teach your children not to borrow or lend hats, combs or other personal items.

What should I do if my child gets it?

- See your family doctor or Public Health Nurse. Ringworm can be treated with a combination of creams and drugs. Treatment may take as long as four to six weeks.
- Notify your child's school. Your child may have caught ringworm at school and other parents need to be on the lookout for it.
- Wash all clothing, bedding and towels your child has used. Machine wash in hot water and dry for at least 20 minutes on the hot cycle of the dryer. Wash combs and brushes in hot, soapy water.
- If your child has ringworm, be sure that he or she washes his or her hands every time they touch the infected skin.

If my child gets ringworm, when can he or she go back to school?

Check with your child's school to find out what their policy is on when children can return to school. Your child can usually return to school 24 hours after ringworm treatment is started.

Impetigo

What is impetigo?

Impetigo is a skin infection caused by a bacteria.

What does it look like?

Impetigo usually begins with small blisters or sores on the face, near the corners of the mouth and nose, or on ears or hands. It can start anywhere there is a break in the skin, such as a cut, sore or insect bite. Impetigo sores are itchy and last longer than an ordinary sore or pimple. They may ooze a honey-coloured fluid and form a yellowish crust when they scab over.

How does impetigo spread?

Impetigo is spread by direct contact with an infected person or with items that have been in contact with the fluid from impetigo sores. Impetigo can also be spread by using towels, clothing or other personal articles used by someone with impetigo. Some types of impetigo are very contagious and will spread quickly unless treated at once.

How can I prevent impetigo?

- Wash hands frequently. This is important whether or not someone in the family has impetigo. Help everyone in your family to get into the habit of washing their hands often.
- Wash small cuts, scratches and bites and keep them covered.
- Avoid direct contact with anyone who might have impetigo.
- Check for signs of impetigo and seek treatment quickly.

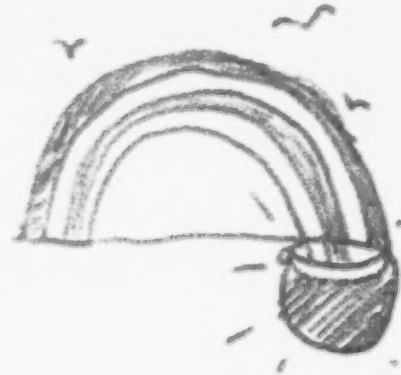
What should I do if my child gets it?

- See a doctor if you think your child has impetigo. The doctor will make sure that the sores really are impetigo and prescribe treatment. Impetigo is usually treated with an ointment or with medicine taken by mouth.

- Remove crusts and scabs by soaking them in warm water and gently washing with soap and water. Then apply the ointment the doctor has prescribed. Repeat this two or three times a day until the sores are healed. Throw away the cloths you use to scrub the sores.
- Cover sores with bandages. This will help keep children from scratching and keep the fluids from the sores away from others. Throw bandages away when you remove them.
- Wash anything that is touched by the fluid from the sores.
- Give each person in the family their own separate soap, towels and washcloths. It is especially important to keep personal articles used by the infected person away from those used by other family members.
- Notify your child's school. Your child may have caught impetigo at school and other parents need to be on the lookout for it.

If my child gets impetigo, when can he or she go back to school?

The doctor will tell you when your child can return to school. Check with your school to find out what their policy is on when children can return to school.



For More Information

For this and other publications produced by the Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection visit our web page at: www.gov.ns.ca/HPP or contact one of the following Public Health Services offices:

Amherst

18 South Albion Street
Phone: 667-3319

Annapolis Royal

Annapolis Community
Health Centre
821 St. George Street
Phone: 532-0490

Antigonish

St Martha's Hospital
23 Bay Street
Phone: 863-2743

Arichat

14 Bay Street
Phone: 226-2944

Baddeck

Victoria County Memorial
Hospital
30 Old Margaree Road
Phone: 295-2178

Barrington Passage

Causeway Shopping Plaza
Phone: 637-2430

Berwick

Western Kings Memorial
Health Centre
121 Orchard Street
Phone: 538-3700

Bridgewater

215 Dominion Street
Suite 109
Phone: 543-0850

Canso

Eastern Memorial Hospital
1746 Union St
Phone: 366-2925

Chester

109 Duke Street
Phone: 275-3581

Cheticamp

Sacred Heart Community
Health Centre
15102 Cabot Trail
Phone: 224-2410

Digby

Digby General Hospital
67 Warwick St.
3rd Floor
Phone: 245-2557

Elmsdale

15 Commerce Court
Suite 150
Phone: 883-3500

Glace Bay

Senator's Place
633 Main Street
2nd Floor
Phone: 842-4050

Guysborough

Guysborough Hospital
10506 Highway 16
Phone: 533-3502

Halifax Regional Municipality

7 Mellor Avenue
Unit 5
Phone: 481-5800

Head of Jeddore

Forest Hills Shopping
Centre
Phone: 889-2143

Inverness

26 Upper Railway St.
Phone: 258-1920

Liverpool

175 School Street
Phone: 354-5737

Lunenburg

Fisherman's Memorial
Hospital
14 High Street
Phone: 634-4014

Meteghan Centre

Clare Medical Centre
8559 Highway #1
Phone: 645-2325

Middle Musquodoboit

Musquodoboit Valley
Memorial Hospital
492 Archibald Brook Road
Phone: 384-2370

Middleton

Soldier's Memorial Hospital
462 Main Street
Phone: 825-3385

Neil's Harbour

Buchanan Memorial
Community Health Centre
PO Box 46
Phone: 336-2295

New Germany
5246, Highway 10
Phone: 644-2710

New Glasgow
690 East River Road
2nd Floor
Phone: 752-5151

New Waterford
New Waterford
Consolidated Hospital
716 King Street
Phone: 862-2204

Port Hawkesbury
708 Reeves Street
Unit 3
Phone: 625-1693

Sheet Harbour
Eastern Shore Memorial
Hospital
Phone: 885-2470

Shelburne
Roseway Hospital
1606 Lake Rd.
Phone: 875-2623

Sherbrooke
St. Mary's Hospital
91 Hospital Road
Phone: 522-2212

St. Peter's
Phone: 1-888-272-0096
(Voicemail only)

Sydney
235 Townsend Street
2nd Floor
Phone: 563-2400

Sydney Mines
7 Fraser Avenue
Phone: 736-6245

Truro
Colchester Regional
Hospital Annex
201 Willow Street
3rd Floor
Phone: 893-5820

Windsor
Windsor Mall
80 Water Street
Phone: 798-2264

Wolfville
Eastern Kings Memorial
Community Health Centre
23 Earncliffe Avenue
Phone: 542-6310

Yarmouth
Yarmouth Regional
Hospital
60 Vancouver Street
4th Floor
Building B
Phone: 742-7141

Mental Health Services Clinics

Amherst
c/o Highland View Regional
Hospital
33 Havelock Street
Ph: (902) 667-3879

Antigonish
St. Martha's Regional
Hospital
25 Bay Street
Ph: (902) 863-4511

Berwick
Annapolis Valley District
Health
Authority
121 Orchard Street
Ph: (902) 538-3111 (X 143)

Bridgewater
South Shore Regional
Hospital
90 Glen Allan Drive
Ph: (902) 527-5228

Halifax
IWK Health Centre
5850-5980 University Ave.
Ph: (902) 464-4110

New Glasgow
Aberdeen Hospital
835 East River Road
Ph: (902) 752-1137

Sydney
Cape Breton Regional
Hospital
1482 George St.
Ph: (902) 567-7730

Truro
Colchester Regional
Hospital
207 Willow St.
Ph: (902) 893-5526

Yarmouth
Yarmouth Regional
Hospital
60 Vancouver St.
Ph: (902) 742-4222

Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Clinics

Clinic locations labeled "A" offer hearing testing and services (Audiology). Locations labeled "S" offer speech and language services.

Location	Contact Number	Services
Halifax	423-7354	A, S
IWK Health Centre	470-7146	A
IWK Newborn Hearing	470-7146	A, S
Amherst	667-1141	A, S
Antigonish	867-4197	A, S
Bridgewater	543-4603, ext. 2248	A, S
Dartmouth	464-3084	S
Digby	245-2501, ext. 265	S
Evanston	625-3100, ext. 257	S
Glace Bay	842-2868	S
Kentville	678-7381, ext. 1400	A, S
Liverpool	345-3436, ext. 246	S
Lower Sackville	869-6150	A, S
Middleton	825-3411, ext. 233	S
Musquodoboit Hbr.	889-4117	S
New Glasgow	752-7600, ext. 2520	A, S
Pictou	485-4324, ext. 125	S
Sheet Harbour	885-3628	S
Shelburne	875-3011, ext. 270	S
Springhill	597-3773	S
Sydney	567-8000	A, S
Sydney Mines	736-2831, ext. 146	A, S
Truro	893-5512, ext. 512	A, S
Waterville	538-3103, ext. 156	S
Windsor	792-2084	S
Yarmouth	742-3541, ext. 364	A, S

How to Prevent, Find, and Treat **Head Lice**



What Are Head Lice?

Head lice are tiny insects that live on the head. They lay eggs (called nits) close to the scalp. Head lice do not spread disease, and having head lice does not mean that you are not clean. Head lice are very common among children. Scratching the head can be a sign of head lice, but you can have head lice without any itching.

How Is Head Lice Spread?

Head lice spread through direct contact among children (head-to-head), or indirectly on items such as hats, combs, hairbrushes, headbands, helmets, and toques.



Head lice:

- do not jump, fly, or hop, but they crawl very quickly
- cannot live on pets or other animals
- can live away from the head for up to 3 days, but their eggs—the nits—need a warm environment to hatch. Nits are not likely to hatch at room temperature.

How to Prevent the Spread of Head Lice

- Check your child's head regularly:
 - once a week as part of your routine
 - after every sleepover
 - every day during lice outbreaks at school
- Keep long hair tied back or braided.
- Teach your child not to share personal items that are used on their head. This means things like brushes, combs, barrettes, headbands, elastics, towels, hats, helmets, toques, and scarves.
- Teach your child to put their hats and scarves in their coat sleeves or backpacks when they take them off at school.

If your child has been in contact with someone who has lice, you need to check your child's head carefully to see if they have caught lice. Head lice spread easily, so if one person in the household has lice, others may have it too. **Check everyone** in the household on the same day.

Check for head lice once a week.

How to Check for Head Lice

What you need

- bright light
- regular comb
- lice comb, a special fine-tooth comb available at any drug store
- hair conditioner—white is best
- paper tissues—white is best
- plastic bag for garbage

What to look for

You are looking for both live head lice, called climbers, and the lice eggs, called nits.

- Adult lice are 2 to 4 mm long, or about the size of a sesame seed. Lice move quickly and can be difficult to see, so it's more likely that you'll see nits.
- Nits are shaped like tiny teardrops and have a brownish white colour. They are about the size of a poppy seed. They are stuck firmly to individual hairs and will not move unless you pull them from the hair with your fingernails or a nit comb.



What to do when checking for head lice

Start behind the ears and check the entire head, hair by hair. **Check all hair from roots to tips.**

An easy way to find live lice is to use conditioner and a lice comb. White conditioner makes it easier to see lice.

- Apply conditioner to dry hair, soaking the hair from the scalp to ends of the hair.
- Remove tangles from the hair using a regular comb.
- Immediately comb with a lice comb. Pick a place to start. Be sure you comb through all hair over the whole head.
- Place the lice comb against the scalp and pull it to the end of the hair.
- After each pull through the hair, check the teeth of the comb for lice. Wipe the conditioner off the comb onto a paper tissue and look for lice again. Place used tissues in a plastic bag.
- Repeat the combing for every part of the head at least 5 times.

If you find head lice

- If you find **live** lice, you have a confirmed case that should be treated.
- If you find **only nits** and they are close to the scalp, you have a probable case of head lice. If the child has not been treated within the last month for head lice, you should treat for head lice now.
- Check everyone else in the household for lice, even if they do not feel itchy.
- Treat everyone in the household who has lice on the same day.

"Conditioner stuns lice for 20 minutes.

So once the hair is properly covered with a layer of conditioner, do not delay in combing those little suckers out!"

Rick Speare, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine,
James Cook University.

How to Treat Head Lice

What you need

• Head lice treatment

Public Health Services recommends using treatments with the following ingredients:

- permethrin, found in products such as Nix or Kwellada-P
- OR
- pyrethrins with piperonyl butoxide, found in products such as R&C, Pronto, Equate, or Licetrol

Other products may be available, but some do not have the ingredients that Public Health Services recommends to kill head lice. Please check for the above ingredients.

- lice comb, a special fine-tooth comb available at any drug store
- regular comb
- clean towel

What to do—10 steps

1 Comb hair with a regular comb to remove tangles.

2 Apply the treatment as follows:

- Shake the bottle.
- Apply the treatment to dry hair, even if the product directions says, "towel dried hair." This will make sure the product is not watered down.
- Put the lice treatment all over the scalp and rub in well.
- Be sure that the treatment covers all of the hair, from the scalp to the ends.
- Leave the treatment on the hair for as long as the package recommends.



3 Rinse out the treatment over the sink.

Don't rinse in a bathtub where the product could get onto other parts of the body. Dry the hair with a clean towel.

4 Comb the hair with a regular comb to remove tangles.



5 Comb for lice with a lice comb.

6 Continue daily lice combing every day between the first and second treatment. It is described in the next section. Do not skip this step!



7 Use the lice treatment a second time, 7 to 10 days after the first treatment. Use the same product, and follow the same steps you used for the first treatment. The first treatment kills the live lice and the second treatment kills any lice that have hatched since the first treatment was done. No product currently available will kill all of the nits.

8 Continue checking household members at least once a week for 3 weeks after the second treatment is done to make sure everyone is free of live lice. See How to Check for Head Lice section of this book (page 55).

There are no short cuts to getting rid of Head Lice!

- 9** If you find live lice after the second treatment has been done, then repeat steps 1 to 8 using a different product (with a different ingredient) to kill the lice. For example, if you used a product with *permethrin*, then choose a different product that has *pyrethrins* with *piperonyl butoxide*. Make sure to do 2 treatments with the new product.

- 10** If you continue to find live head lice after following these steps, contact Public Health Services.

Keys to controlling head lice

- Two treatments, 7 to 10 days apart, for every household member who has live lice
- **Daily lice combing** between treatments
- Careful checking of everyone who has been in close contact with someone who has head lice
- Cleaning personal and household items that the people with lice may have used

Daily Lice Combing

Comb for lice every day between the first and second treatments. The first treatment will not kill all of the nits. Daily combing is needed to remove any lice that will hatch. If the new lice aren't removed, they'll lay more nits in 9 to 15 days and start the cycle over again. **This step is key to your success in getting rid of head lice!**

- 1** Wet your child's hair. It should be damp, not dripping wet.
- 2** Comb hair with a regular comb to remove tangles.
- 3** Part the hair into thin, narrow sections. Comb with a lice comb (fine tooth comb) one section at a time.
- 4** Place the lice comb against the scalp and pull it to the end of the hair.
- 5** Check the teeth of the lice comb after each pull through the hair. Rinse off any lice or nits under running water or wipe them away with a tissue. Drop each tissue into a bag.
- 6** Repeat the combing for every section of hair at least 5 times.
- 7** When you finish lice combing, wash the comb under the tap. Use a nailbrush or old toothbrush to get between the teeth of the comb. If you've been using tissues to wipe the comb, tie the bag closed and throw it away. Soak the comb in very hot water for 10 minutes or store in the freezer for 24 hours before using again.

Daily Lice combing is very important.

Household Clean Up

- **Wash combs, brushes, and hair accessories**—such as scrunchies, barrettes, and headbands—with hot, soapy water until all lice or nits are removed. Then soak them in very hot water for 10 minutes. Or you can put them in the freezer for 24 hours.
- **Use very hot, soapy water to wash clothing, sheets, towels, pillowcases, and so forth**, used by any household members with head lice in the last 3 days.
- **Treat items that you can't wash**, such as blankets, coats, and stuffed toys, in one of the following ways:
 - Put it in a closed plastic bag for 10 days.
 - Put it in a hot dryer for 20 minutes.
 - Put it in the freezer for 24 hours.
 - Iron it.
- **Vacuum mattresses, carpets, and furniture.** Head lice can live away from the human head for up to 3 days.
- **Do not use lice spray** around your home. There is no proof that spraying will help control lice, and it may harm family members or pets.



Other Treatments

You may have heard of using household products such as vaseline, mayonnaise, hair gel, or olive oil to treat head lice. Please remember that such methods have not been proven to work. Applying these products is thought to plug the holes through which the lice breathe. But head lice can live without air for up to 6 hours.

If you use one of these products, apply a thick coating to the hair and leave it on for at least 8 hours at a time. You may wish to apply before bedtime, cover hair with a shower cap overnight, and wash hair with regular shampoo in the

morning. This may suffocate the live lice, but the nits will not be affected and will continue to hatch. You will need to repeat these treatments several times over 2 to 3 weeks. Remember to also use **daily lice combing**.

Some people have used natural products such as tea tree oil, other essential oils, and aromatherapy products to treat head lice. Public Health Services does not recommend the use of such products, because we don't know whether they are safe or effective.

Other products such as gasoline or kerosene are flammable (easily set on fire) and toxic (poison). They are not recommended by Public Health Services because they are dangerous.



Flammable



Toxic

For More Information

Websites:

- Speare, Rick. School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. James Cook University: www.jcu.edu.au/school/phtm/PHTM/hlice/hlinfo1.htm
- Pollack, Richard. Harvard School of Public Health: www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html
- Canadian Paediatric Society: www.caringforkids.cps.ca/whensick/HeadLice.htm
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/lice/default.htm

